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LIFE, ART, AND LETTERS OF GEORGE INNESS

By George Inness, Jr.

Boston (Williams & Everett
Doll & Richards
Francis Dealey.

N.Y. John Snedecor

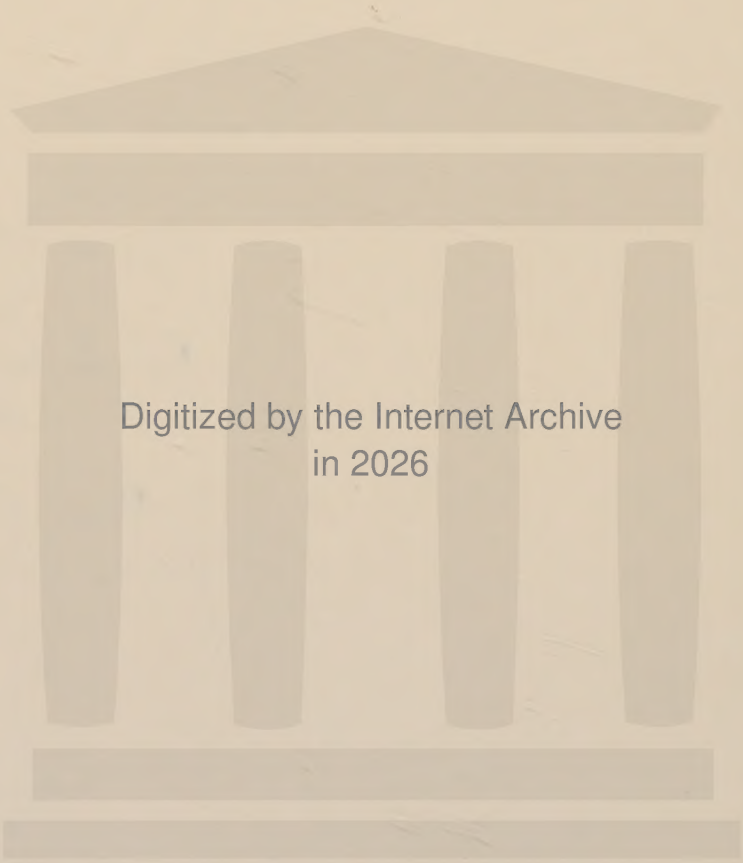
for Woods
Geo Cass

Frothingham
Sweet aid

Mrs Hartley
Geo Somness's
daughter

Paints on pull
board

Pz's sketches
from Nature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By George Inness, Jr.

INTRODUCTION BY ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

Kennedy Galleries, Inc. • Da Capo Press
New York • 1969

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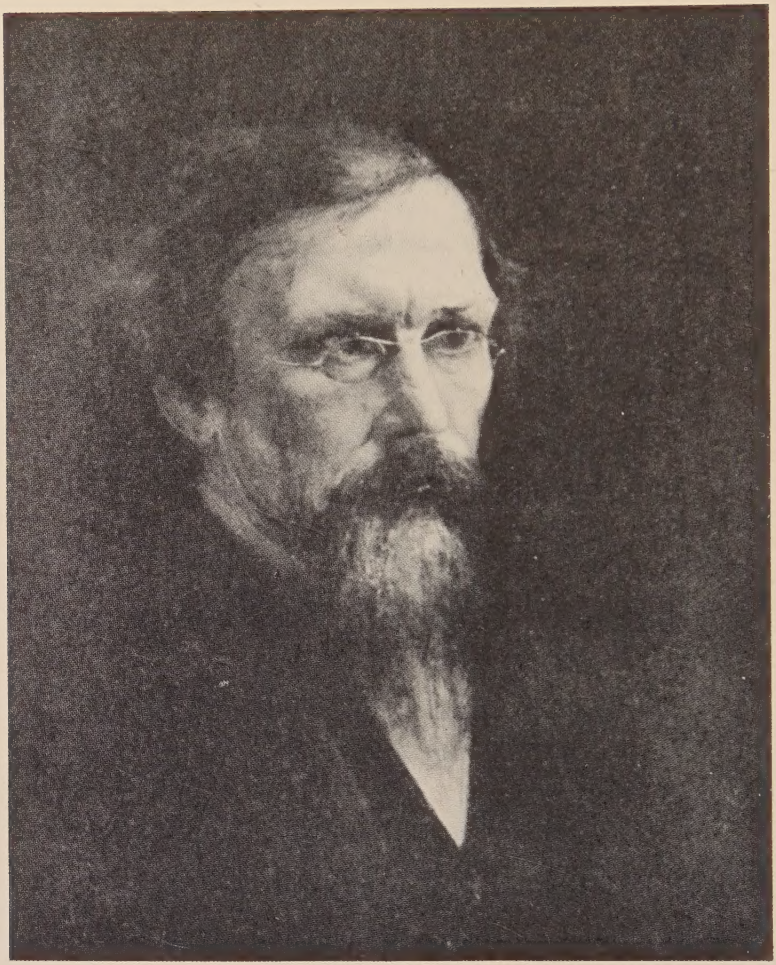

GEORGE INNESS
(Painted by George Inness, Jr.)

LIFE, ART, AND LETTERS OF GEORGE INNESS

BY

GEORGE INNESS, Jr.

ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS AND
MANY REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1917

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Published, October, 1917

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO
MY DEAR WIFE

JULIA GOODRICH INNESS

WHO HAS FILLED MY LIFE WITH
HAPPINESS AND WHOSE HELP
AND COUNSEL HAVE MADE
THIS WORK POSSIBLE

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PREFACE

What I would like to give you is George Inness; as he was, as he talked, as he lived—not what I saw in him or how I interpreted him, but *him*—and having given you all I can remember of what he said and did I want you to form your own opinion.

My story shall be a simple rendering of facts—as I remember them; in other words, I will put the pigment on the canvas and leave it to you to form the picture.

GEORGE INNESS, JR.

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I wish to acknowledge the courtesy of the following persons and institutions who have been of great assistance in furnishing me with the material for this book: Mrs. J. Scott Hartley, Mr. James W. Ellsworth, Mr. Thomas B. Clarke, Mr. Victor Harris, Mr. Martin A. Ryerson and Mr. Ralph Cudney; The Metropolitan Museum of Art and M. Knoedler & Co., New York City, The Art Institute of Chicago.

I wish also to make acknowledgment of the services of my friend, Leize R. Godwin, whose wise counsel has made the task of writing this book a pleasure.

INTRODUCTION

Biography is always interesting when true, and valuable in the same degree. It takes on a new character when written by oneself in the form of memoirs, yet is seldom fully successful, because of the human temptation to suppress real and interesting facts, or, when sufficient effrontery or courage—if it be courage—exists to tell everything, the reader is likely to be offended, even if interested.

In this way the memoirs of Cellini might have been more valuable, though less interesting, if another had set down the truths of this man's inner life and character. It is almost, if not quite, impossible for one to analyze one's own soul and write out for public gaze the secrets hidden there. It shocks the sensitive spirit and creates a wound not to be borne; therefore, as it seems to me, all biography treads the broad highway of external facts and passing events, leaving the deep, still pools, which reflect all the spiritual and emotional being, untroubled. In this condition of things we must be content with what we can get, being assured that whatever we can preserve of the life and

impulses of a great man will be of value to the world.

It does not follow that intimacy gives one the privilege of interpretation, but at least it assures us a measure of truth, which increases its richness in the proportion of sympathy brought to the task, because sympathy begets insight. Without sympathy virtually all observation is blind, and no one quality in man's nature is so potent in removing the scales from true vision.

We do not know what we should have had if George Inness had written his own biography. Eccentric it certainly would have been, with slight attention paid to those externals which are of interest to the general reader; for he was the most impersonal of men. He was never interested in himself as a man, though he was interested in the artistic man. He believed in himself as an artist very profoundly, and his mind, which was most alert, was ever delving into or solving problems connected with what he called the principles of painting. Of this sort of thing we should have had a great deal, more indeed than any of us could have understood, because he was not always coherent. To himself his reasoning was very clear; indeed, he valued the results of these mental debates greatly, many times writing them down. What has become of these writings I do not know, but no doubt they were written in such a vagrant, dis-

jointed way that they could not be pieced together by another.

In speech his vocabulary was rapid, extensive, extreme, not always well chosen as to meaning; but, when supplied with gesture and expression, words took on new meanings, and for the time were understandable. If reported verbatim, they would have failed of meaning. Just how they would have appeared in any biography I do not know, for cold type is ever a cruel critic.

He once expounded to me what he called the ascent of a fleck of soot to the pure diamond by the vortexical progress, and proved, to himself at least, divinity. Frankly, I could not follow either the thought or the reasoning, though it seemed intensely interesting, and I begged him to write it down. He said that he had spent the night doing so, but I have never heard of the writing, and inquiry did not reveal it. During the delivery of this exegesis his declamation was flaming, very fierce, and assured. His eyes sparkled, and his mane-like hair was tossed about, and hands were as vigorously in motion as possible, the whole manner commanding attention; but once completed, once fully told, the fever passed, and he was silent and very quiet. After such struggles he returned to his painting with new spirit and new insight, and always one could see the growth in power in the work. Who

shall say what he saw within himself, what new realms or wide horizons were opened to his vision?

He was a man of great energy, and with no great amount of strength otherwise, and always he drove himself to the utmost. His best work was ever accomplished at white heat and under great emotion. Watching him closely, I many times saw him at work with cold calculation, but without exception these pictures endured only for a time, and were repainted when the fever was upon him. It was this consuming energy which burned up his vitality and brought his end. There was no other reason, no disease or insistent illness sapping away his life, but rather a burning up. Many canvases which have come down to us in their beauty and glowing glory cost him days of exquisite agony, so that we may truly say of them that they were painted with heart's blood.

In his mind there was no particle of that quality which we have come to know as modern art. His own was cast in those channels the canons of which have been written in all ages by those great men whose genius has made their work endure. He knew that fashion in art is a theory and a vain bubble, of no account to those who blow it or those who think its colors of worth. During his working days there were as many *isms* abroad as there are to-day, but he would have none of them, realizing keenly, as most

thoughtful men do, that their lure is rather to the man who has no power of thought, of invention within himself; that it is not, and, in its own nature, cannot be born of sincerity. Here alone is the rock upon which the true artist ever takes his stand.

Our study of the great work of George Inness easily discovers its sincerity. It matters not if we are looking at the careful studies of early days or the more synthetic canvases of the last years, we read in them all knowledge. How like the name of a god the word comes in the midst of work based on crudity! To Inness it was an essential thing, and always behind the consciousness of knowledge was nature.

In those works which express the man's message, there is never a servile copying of place or thing; yet both are in place, both fully understood, and the beauty of the nature he wishes us to see is fully revealed—revealed, too, in George Inness's way. And that again is one of the beauties of great landscape art —any art, for that matter, which claims to be fine art—it is always plus the man.

There is little gain for art in the exquisite copying of things. Many have tried it, many have spent long hours and days in servile reproduction, and begotten in the end an emptiness, a thing which has the same relation to art that an inanimate has to an animate creature; but in the study which produces understand-

ing, in the loving observation which teaches, in the absorption of idea—in such ways men acquire the knowledge which gives them expression, which permits them, within the silence of four blank walls, to see visions and to give gifts to men. It is through such works that we know and love the great men, and through such works that they uplift humanity and better civilization. They left for us a curtain, and eyes which have been dull before are illumined. A great work, indeed!

It is because of this great inner vision that George Inness must take rank among the greatest landscape-painters, almost, we might say, himself the greatest of all, but for that American objection to the claims of any man in any walk of life to being acclaimed greatest.

Yet a measure of his work is being taken by the passing years, and we begin to see what a genius has dwelt among us. No matter the carping voice of critic, no matter the contempt of little painters of painted things, this was his towering gift to us—this power to present the essence of things. Consider, the greatest of his pictures were painted out of what people fondly call his imagination, his memory—painted within the four walls of a room, away from and without reference to any particular nature; for he himself was nature. And it is not alone the beauty

of a great elm against a sunlit sky, it is not merely the chase of storm-driven clouds, it is not only the crash and thunder of mighty seas against the rock-ribbed shores of a continent, not morning, noon, or night; not one, but all were his, and all are George Inness.

His versatility was enormous; the glow of it wrapped about him like a flame. His eyes burned like fire when in coal and red-hot; he looked through the blank canvas, through the besmeared paint, through the days and hours of work, to that vision which was within himself, and that alone was his goal, and no likeness of any place or thing tempted him aside. The impetuosity of it as he approached the goal was like a storm, and to any but an understanding eye the process was as devastating as a storm; but high above the trammels of technic, of form, of color, or pigment, his soul, eagle-like, soared to its aery, and the vision, wide of horizon, perfect in all its parts, was complete. Men do not paint so who have not the immortal spark. Tiresome drones who do their little, and delude themselves—how easily are they scorched in such a fire! Fire it was, but not always alight. No man had deeper moods of despondency, no man suffered more deeply under baffled aims, no man more ruthlessly destroyed in order to make new, than this painter; but like a grim warrior, against

whose striving the battle has gone badly, he would say, "I 'll do it to-morrow." The splendor of this courage never left him. To the last he knew and believed in his own gift, and seldom did it fail him. Time alone was needed, and the beautiful thing was sure of birth.

There is no doubt that he died when his powers were at their full; he would not have been content to linger if they had waned, and he would have been keenly aware of it.

Elsewhere I have tried to show that there was change: the early, exact, careful analysis; the middle, broader, fuller, more colored period; and the latest, synthetic style, which includes so many of his beautiful works. But always the power was there.

It is perhaps interesting to note the difference in the artist who works in the way that I have here tried to indicate and in that more exact copyist, who, strong only in his eyes, and depending always upon them, grows blind and weak at the last. His is never the glory of departing in flame, like some grand old viking, who seeks his rest in the burning hour of inspiration.

A painter critic has spoken of Mr. Inness's technic as being "empirical." By technic he refers to the method of using his pigment to produce result. Such

an opinion is largely the voice of the schoolman, of one who in the schools was taught the precise method of mixing tints and conveying them to the canvas, each tint to represent a certain plane or value in the form. One does not want to quarrel with the schools, for their place and usefulness is clear, but it is quite possible to say that the student who stops with what he gains in a school does not go far. If he does not pursue, investigate, and experiment, he will never discover, and discovery is essential to any personal technical expression; and such development, when successful, is apt to reveal not only the painter, but the artist. Also, one must be able to control this result of experiment until it becomes a servant, willing, plastic, ready at all times to the guiding will. This was colossally so with George Inness, and his technical power was so superior to what the intellectual schoolmen accomplish that his work burns with the fire of genius and inspiration. He himself believed that his method was intensely scientific. Certainly the proof lies in his work. If there were times when it seemed to fail him, times when change and repainting were necessary, it may not rest a charge against the clarity of his method. Much goes into the use of pigment other than brush-work. An over-strained nervous system, a stomach out of order, a voice which persists will untune the finer forces and render a day's work

wholly abortive; the humming of a fly or bee has robbed many a sensitive artist of his day's result.

Inness knew truths of color that I have never known any one else even to glimpse. He knew great principles of color application which lesser men could not grasp. He had no interest in details of color or in small, attentuated tints. His was the power of mass, the authority of tone upon tone, the concentration of a tone in its base color, which lured you into consciousness of its presence. In another it would have been inconceivably dull and stagnant. For these reasons and more I believe he not only had a masterly technic, but I believe it more nearly equaled the strength and understanding of the great masters than any of our men have attained. He is certainly not like any one of the great galaxy; you may find kinship of energy and dynamic force in Tintoretto more than another. He was fond of thinking it was Titian he most resembled, and the spiritist mediums, finding this out, were forever telling him that Titian stood at his elbow. The impetuosity of Tintoretto was fully reflected in Inness: his swiftness in composition, his ease of expression with the brush in great masses without previous outlines reflects, also, some of the great Italian's characteristics, and each had the capacity for holding the wild, splendid force in leash until great tenderness was achieved. To say, then,

that his technic was anything but suitable is to misstate, and to misunderstand the man.

Among the younger painters of the day it is a habit to speak slightingly of Mr. Inness and his method of work. They say his technic was fumbling, uncertain, glazy, and lacking in directness; that he could not paint frankly or directly; that his effects were rather matters of chance than anything else. Oh, the wisdom of youth—youth whose smallest utterance is axiomatic! Have they ever seriously looked upon the "Gray, Lowery Day," a canvas painted rapidly, with no hint of glaze or fumble, a canvas in which the goal is reached with the precision of the great master? And such a goal! Here is no simple sketch of uninteresting objects, but a mood of nature so subtle that thought of it even is intangible and enveloped within intricacies of form so elaborate that the rendering of them under most passive conditions would tax the powers of any technician; and yet this envelop of moist, rainy atmosphere is rendered with a direct touch, a transfer of pigment to canvas as direct and exact as a Franz Hals or a John Sargent, both the gods of direct painting; and in the finished result Mr. Inness has produced a work of unity and pure beauty, enough in itself to proclaim him a world master.

Or, again, may I direct the attention of these im-

mature artists to that other well-known work and very noble example of direct painting, the "Summer Foliage," a picture in which the difficulties were enormous and the details most elaborate, involving, also, a control over greens, which is a most trying color to manage, and the brush of George Inness moves with a sanity and joy that is fair necromancy? No juggler could have handled his material with more alertness and conviction, and there has never for an instant been the loss of the central vision of beauty. This was the creed of George Inness—beauty. Translated into all its forms, loved as spirit, religion, God, this he searched daily, hourly, and worshiped.

Could he have had an early intellectual, even scientific, training, he would have reached tremendous heights intellectually, for his mind was that of an investigator. If to-day the things we read of his are incoherent, they are so rather in form than substance. A careful analysis will discover the true center, the germ truth which he wished to convey, and nearly always it is a vision, a creation of an intense, yearning spirit. Intense, eager, often abandoned in his speech, there was the glow of idea behind all his thought; and however abstruse the theme, he carried it back with unerring persistence to his work. There, he knew, was his chief hope of expression.

Does it matter if untrained minds can not read

these things in his works? Does it matter if a large element of the general public, or even the artistic public, shall say these things are purely imaginary, no picture can contain such things, it is merely what it appears to be, and that ends it? The answer is, George Inness did not trouble himself to paint for this public. First and foremost, he, the artist, not the man, was to be satisfied; he must be able to discern in the work that significance he sought to hand on, and when he found it in his picture, that moment the canvas was finished. Finished then for him was expression. Try him by no other laws. Complain not of roughness or smoothness, cavil not at incomplete or imperfectly rendered forms, at blemishes, or scratches, or unexplained spots. These may all be present, but behind all is the man, and his vision freely given and freely expressed. If we cannot see, the fault lies in ourselves.

Just as truly all these things may be said of any of the masters: of Corot less perhaps than of Rousseau; of Dupré more than of Millet; of Velasquez; of Hals; of everybody who has been remembered in the great mill-race flood of painters through the ages. Few, alas! can grapple with the mighty forces underlying a great work; but none surely may be frivolous or contemptuous in its presence, unless, indeed, he be

a Post-impressionist or Futurist. But, then, I am speaking of human beings.

Can any sane man, however untrained, go into the presence of the great portrait of Innocent X by Velasquez and remain unmoved? Can any man of even partial culture remain unmoved in the presence of the great "Moonlight" recently shown by George Inness? These are of the essence of greatness, and it is this essence which George Inness distilled in the long years of his labor, until in the end the roll of his great achievements was very long.

He often wished that he might be privileged to paint only one truly great work. Perhaps, in those halls where gather the great of all times and ages and peoples he has been welcomed with this assurance. That might well be heaven indeed to so striving a soul.

Mr. Inness was most happily fortunate in his marriage. To one of his impetuous, easily ruffled nature the lack of sympathy in his wife would have been a constant irritation and impediment to his progress; but his wife was sensitive to his every mood, careful of his needs, keenly alive to his hopes in his work, and to the last hour of his life his comfort and his friend. That last cry at the Bridge-of-Allan, when he knew the final moment had come, was not to God or man.

"Take me to my wife," he said. She was then his refuge and his strength, and we, who have had so much from him, must remember her, with fullest gratitude.

You will search far in his work to find an insincere canvas or an irreverent one. If there were times when he painted the uncongenial thing because it was ordered, it was done that he might be free to pursue those beacons which ever burned ahead of him.

No man ever had a more bitter tongue for the thing which was untrue in art—"a sham," as he called it. No man could scold with sterner rebuke, and none was more generous in praise when it was deserved.

If we are to estimate him correctly or fully, we must see clearly and bring together all these qualities, and then only may we discover the true worth of his work.

It is not enough to say, "That 's a fine thing," of a work which contains so much. It is not enough to pass it with a slight comment, as we see so frequently done by our critics. A great work merits great attention and deep consideration, and it is necessary to bring to such consideration ripe understanding. Also preconceived bias warps judgment. Mr. Inness was not always a good critic; his own thoughts dominated him, forced him to see things in his own way; and to

yield to him palette and brushes was to unfold speedily not a criticism, but an Inness. Perhaps this should be so, as a strong personality should not give up its own; but one would look elsewhere for criticism. For such reasons, no doubt, Mr. Inness had no pupils. He had from time to time certain men near him, but with him to teach meant to control.

I have always been glad that he was so violent. It is better to swallow one's spleen and learn than to chew the rag of discontent.

Nowhere in his work will be found any picture with likeness to the art of another; they are his own, warp and woof, and no shred of anybody else creeps in, and this despite his avowed admiration for many others. Time after time I 've heard him say of some finished thing, when his enthusiasm was ripe, "It 's like a Claude," or a "Turner," and then slyly, "but it 's more like an Inness." For Claude and for Turner he had great admiration, but also ready criticism. He was hostile to anything that was "niggled." Breadth was essential, and for this quality many of his own works were obliterated, but his relentless courage brought the great work to completion in time.

Much has been written of him as artist and man, much that savors merely of the reporter's comments, and some things so vague and wordy that nothing of

an image remains. I, myself, have tried to set down in various places and ways my impressions gained in many years of close association, but I am aware of the futility of recreation. He has gone, and the wisest and best way to know George Inness is to sit before his works, to search them to their depths, to study each item of composition, its bearing upon the great mass, to find, if one may, the law by which he constructed his proportions and placements, to discover the reasons for color or tone choice, or that deeper significance, the impulse, artistic and religious, which created it. So we will come into closer touch with his great genius, so we will live with his spirit, and presently be able to understand why he should be accorded that high place in landscape art which is second to none, more dynamic than many, intenser than all, true as the best, and with a musical chord in his color that has never been approached.

In the work before us his son, an artist of rich attainments, has given us a picture of his father, the man and his habits, and with this has told to us, in incident and story, many of them new to me as they will be to the public, all reflecting most clearly the ingenuous nature of his father. With this he has combined letters and opinions of great value, the letters being tender, sweet chords from that melody of perfect love which existed between the master and his

wife, full of the faith and trust which made her presence his inspiration. In the writings, some of a purely scientific nature, it is necessary to acquaint oneself with his point of view, his trend of thought; once this is secured, the reasoning clarifies and becomes of greatest value.

At a moment in our art when the young people and many of the public are being hoodwinked and blinded by the follies which followed the first onslaught of Impressionism, like a procession of harlequins, gnomes, misshapen and weird things, the opinion of George Inness is worth study and reflection. His was not a sight to be blinded by an eccentricity, his was not an experience to be misled, nor could he believe the message of the masters was to be ignored; therefore, brief as they are, and I would that the "mountains of writings" Mr. Inness often referred to had been given us entire, their value is extreme.

The picture is very clear; the man revisits us, and the wizardry of his work is our precious possession.

Time, inexorable and vast, passes along the way; he reaps here and he reaps there, and the reapings fall and wither, but ever he stops with each passing year to lay a fresh leaf of imperishable laurel upon the calm brow of him who lives forever.

ELLIOTT DAINGERFIELD.

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LIFE, ART, AND LETTERS OF GEORGE INNESS

"Let us believe in Art, not as something to gratify curiosity or suit commercial ends, but something to be loved and cherished because it is the Handmaid of the Spiritual Life of the age."

GEORGE INNESS

LIFE, ART, AND LETTERS OF GEORGE INNESS

CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

MY first recollection of my father was watching him paint a wash-tub, and the impression then made has never left me. In my eyes he was a hero, a wizard, for there stood the tub,—it was a round one of white pine, bound with three brass hoops, and it had handles opposite each other that stood up above the sides,—and suddenly it began to assume another color, a green vivid enough to charm the soul of any child. The odor of oil and turpentine is still in my nostrils, and in my long experience of oil and turpentine, covering a period of more than fifty years, I have never since encountered just the same odor. I have watched many painters paint tubs, houses, wagons, and other things since then, but never have I seen a painter do it in quite the same way.

Pop—I always called him Pop—drew the brush

along the tub, leaving a long green streak; then he stepped back several paces and held his hand above his eyes and looked at the effect, a gesture and a position that were characteristic of my father throughout his life. This was repeated after every few strokes of the brush until the whole was complete, and there stood the tub in all its glory of green. It was so beautiful that I was almost frightened. Pop took me by the hand and led me from the room. From that time until we moved to the country, Medfield, Massachusetts, most of my memory seems to be a blank.

But before going into the Medfield period, which was one of the most important in my father's life, I want to go back and trace the early steps that led up to the achievements of those maturer years in Massachusetts.

Much has been written to give the impression that my father sprang from poor and humble folk, and that, like Benjamin West, the one-time president of the Royal Academy, and others, he had to resort to such measures as cutting off the cat's tail to obtain a paint-brush, and use the juice of huckleberry-pie and raspberry jam for colors with which to paint his masterpieces. Such things teach a fine moral for the school reader, but the obstacles with which my father had to contend in his early life were not financial ones.

GEORGE INNESS, JR.

His parents were well-to-do people and for the time in which they lived were considered rich.

My grandfather was a prosperous merchant of Scotch descent. He was energetic and thrifty and was ambitious for his children's success. Having made his fortune early in life he retired from active business and bought a farm near Newburg, New York, more, I fancy, for recreation than for profit. It was there on May 1, 1825, that George Inness was born. He was the fifth of thirteen children. All his brothers entered mercantile life and became very successful business men.

When George was only a few months old, and before the time of Hudson River boats, the elder Inness moved his family to New York in an antiquated vessel of some sort. George, being an infant, was laid in a basket so that the perilous journey might be more comfortably made.

Four years later they moved to Newark, New Jersey, where my father's boyhood was spent. Newark was then a little country town, and the Inness residence was on top of a high hill overlooking rich farm lands. Later this land was laid out in streets. My grandfather's house stood where High Street and Nesbit Street, now Central Avenue, meet in the heart of the great manufacturing center of Newark.

While in that city my father attended the acad-

emy. It soon became evident that he was making little progress with his studies; and after repeated failure he was declared deficient, and it was decided that it was useless to keep him at school.

That he was not dull or stupid is shown by the fact that his sisters, who are still living, testify to his cleverness and fun-loving propensities. One story they tell is that he made and operated a galvanic battery. What uses the battery was put to beyond giving shocks to the other children and the family cat I do not know. But that was sufficient to prove that it "worked."

Among other pranks that come natural to the small boy, he modeled snakes and fierce reptiles from wax, painted them bright colors, and put them in the cupboards to frighten the maids and any one else who happened to have business there. Like many a genius before him, the tortured and provincial methods of schoolmasters cramped his imagination and forced him into more original developments.

Of delicate health, and endowed with a keenly sensitive nature, the boy was considered "different." He was a dreamer, an idealist from earliest childhood, and lived much in a world of his own imaginings. In speaking of his aims and ambitions, my father once told me that his desires first began to crystallize when, as a very little chap, he saw a man

painting a picture out in a field. Immediately a responsive chord was struck, and his own nebulous groping for self-expression became at once a concrete idea. Then and there he made up his mind that when he grew up he would be a painter. He told me that he thought it the most wonderful thing in the world to make with paint the things that he saw around him, clouds, trees, sunsets, and storms, the very things that brought him fame in later years. He told me with what awe he viewed the difficulty of getting a piece of paper big enough, for he thought that to paint a landscape one had to have a paper as large as the scene itself—a thought as naïvely conceived as it was expressed, which showed even then the breadth and largeness of his nature as manifested in feeling and expression in his canvases.

Had his parents been of finer clay they would have seen that this boy with a vision was destined for something higher than the mercantile life into which they tried to force him; or had he been born on the other side of the water, his talent for art would have been fostered and encouraged not only by his family, but by the state, as was the case with Millet and others of the French school, who were sent to Paris to study at the expense of the communities in which they lived.

But it must be remembered that in this country at the time of George Inness's birth there were virtually

no advantages to be had in art, and there were even less interest and appreciation in the development of it. In the building of our nation there had been little time to explore the esthetic fields of art. There had been no time for pictures. A picture-painter was beyond the pale. An artist was little short of a disgrace. A painter of pictures! A ne'er-do-well! George Inness might as well have been a play-actor, a piano-player, or a poet. He was frankly a disappointment.

On one occasion—I remember so well how Pop would tell it with a chuckle—he met his brother Joe on the street. Joe was at that time a cash-boy in a dry-goods store, and a very important young person in his own eyes. When he saw my father he assumed a somewhat superior attitude; in fact he did not have to assume it. It was more or less chronic with him, but he no doubt increased it.

"Hello, George," he said, and rattled his coins in his pocket. "Made any money to-day painting pictures? Why don't you go to work and do something? Make a living like I am doing, instead of wasting your time painting pictures. Who wants pictures?" Father did n't say much, but he seized him by the scruff of the neck, and when he got through with him, there was not enough left of Joe to listen to father's answer.

This attitude on the part of his family was of little moment to Pop. Fired with a passionate desire to put down on canvas what he saw in nature, the beauties of the world around him, he kept his vision clear. Nor did he surrender for one moment that determination that carried him to the foremost ranks of American art.

However, a faint hope lingered in the practical, paternal breast. There was yet time to make a man of the boy. His schooling had been a failure. The elder Inness conceded that, but he determined to try more practical methods; so at the age of fourteen my father was ensconced in a little grocery-store on the corner of Washington and New streets, Newark, as sole proprietor and owner. He used to love to tell about those days, of how he concealed a canvas, a few paints and brushes, and an easel behind the counter; and how he would sit there and paint by the hour amidst the odors of onions, soap, sulphur matches, and kindling wood; and how, when customers came, he would duck behind the counter and wait until they left. By such methods business waned, and at the end of a month an episode occurred which brought the experiment to a close, and proved to be the turning-point in my father's career. After a day of unusual activity and many distractions a little girl entered the store. Father crouched behind the

counter as was his habit, hoping the child would leave when she found no one to wait upon her. But the little girl, equally determined to carry out her mission, stood on tiptoes, reached up, and jingled her pennies so persistently on the counter that the young painter's nerves gave way, and he sprang from his lair like a jack-in-the-box and yelled:

"What in the name of all the devils do you want?"

Terrified, the little girl rushed from the store and down the street crying:

"Candles! candles! candles!"

Thoroughly exasperated, the boy gathered up his beloved canvases and all the tools of his chosen profession, and walked out of the store. He carefully locked the door, put up the heavy wooden shutters at the windows, and turned his back forever on commercial life. Thus the greatest conquest of his life was won.

At such a time when one does not have proper perspective on actions and conditions in life, a thing such as this grocery-store incident would seem a catastrophe; no doubt it did to my father's family, but in the light of retrospection we see that just such a radical move was necessary to force the embryo artist to that point of exasperation which culminated in the actual turning-point in his career. It was the jolt that pushed him into his proper channel.

It was a wise decision on my grandfather's part, when realizing that it was quite impossible to fit a square peg into a round hole, he abandoned the hope of molding his son to his own desires, and placed him in the studio of a man named Barker, a teacher of drawing and painting in Newark, to learn the trade. For if his son persisted in being a vagabond painter, he wanted to make him as good a one as was in his power, and give him every advantage that he could. After a few months of instruction Barker declared that he could teach George no more, that the boy knew as much as he did.

Later he worked in an engraver's office, but his health was poor and his inclinations weak, so he soon abandoned this branch of the arts and entered the studio of Régis Gignoux, a French artist of some local reputation, whose landscapes may be seen to-day among the older collections in New York. Gignoux had lived in Paris, and had been a pupil of Paul Delaroche; therefore it was with a keen interest that my father took up his studies with one who seemed to him at that time eminent. He did not stay with Gignoux long but learned from him the handling of color and the theories of composition, but, as Alfred Trumble expresses it in his "Memorial of George Inness," "The pictures themselves did not satisfy him. He knew that he was groping in the dark. He was

painting as others around him were painting, not as he felt, as he wished to paint. These things, he argued with himself, were not nature. They had none of the spirit of nature in them. They were mere colored drawings, inspired with none of the movement and vitality that he felt instinctively when he looked abroad at forest and farm land, mountain, river, and sky."

"One afternoon," said Inness, "when I was completely dispirited and disgusted, I gave over work and went out for a walk. In a print-shop window I noticed an engraving after one of the old masters. I do not remember what picture it was. I could not then analyze that which attracted me in it, but it fascinated me. The print-seller showed me others, and they repeated the same sensation in me. There was a power of motive, a bigness of grasp, in them. They were nature, rendered grand instead of being belittled by trifling detail and puny execution. I began to take them out with me to compare them with nature as she really appeared, and the light began to dawn. I had no originals to study, but I found some of their qualities in Cole and Durand, to which I had access. There was a lofty striving in Cole, although he did not technically realize that for which he reached. There was in Durand a more intimate feeling of na-

THE MILL
(Painted at sixteen)

ture. 'If,' thought I, 'these two can only be combined! I will try!' "

The result is well known to all lovers of Inness. Not only did he succeed in combining those qualities that impressed him in the works of the masters that he studied assiduously, but he added that dominant quality of spirituality, or bigness of vision, that was the key-note of his life. I cannot express it better than by letting him speak direct. He said:

"The true use of art is, first, to cultivate the artist's own spiritual nature, and, second, to enter as a factor in general civilization. And the increase of these effects depends on the purity of the artist's motive in the pursuit of art. Every artist who, without reference to external circumstances, aims truly to represent the ideas and emotions which come to him when he is in the presence of nature is in process of his own spiritual development and is a benefactor of his race. Of course no man's motive can be absolutely pure and single. His environment affects him. *But the true artistic impulse is divine.*"

When he was scarcely more than a boy he married Delia Miller of Newark, who died a few months afterward. This marriage seems to have been of little importance; it was apparently only an episode in his early life.

He now opened his first studio, and began to paint according to the new ideas he had obtained from the study of the old prints. Not only friends, but fellow-artists, so called, tried to persuade him that he could never paint that way. Set rules were laid down for painting landscapes, and they must not be violated by a mere upstart boy who would not paint his foreground trees brown, and who persisted in leaving out the plant, the foreground plant, the key to the Hudson River school. In consequence his struggle for existence became more acute, until his brothers finally had to come to the rescue, and for several years kept his head above water by buying his pictures and reselling them when and where they could. His contempt for the commercial aspect of life was profound, and he made no attempt to conceal it. He has expressed himself many times in tones that left no room for contradiction that business was obligated to sustain art, and that merchants were created only to support artists.

Despite the opposition against which he battled there were a few progressive souls dominant enough and wise enough to recognize and proclaim genius. One day when Inness was out in the open square sketching a crowd gathered around him and gazed with awe. Such things as artists painting in the parks were unheard of in those days. The crowd,

having satisfied its curiosity, melted away; but there remained one man whose interest was more than idle curiosity, for when the sketch was nearly complete he said to the young painter:

"If you will bring the picture to my house when you finish it, I will give you a hundred dollars for it."

That man was Ogden Haggerty, a prominent auctioneer in New York. He was the first to recognize my father's possibilities, and later became so convinced of his genius that he sent him abroad to study, and was one of the main factors in his development as a painter.

CHAPTER II

EARLY INFLUENCES

NOT only was my father born in a period of the world's history when art was undergoing a very radical change, but coexistent with that change there was taking place a subtle renaissance of spiritual thought. Dissatisfied with the outworn forms and traditions of worship, individual thinkers were asserting themselves, and now and then a powerful thought was projected, causing new impressions to rise to the surface of the sea of religious ideas, showing the undercurrent of a mighty change that was taking place in the world of mind. George Inness was just such a thinker, though he wandered through all phases of religious expression to find himself, and was well on towards middle life before he found that medium which satisfied him.

Born into a family of various creeds and beliefs, the boy was brought up on religious discussion. His mother was a devout Methodist, his aunt, who later became his stepmother, was an equally devout Baptist. His uncle, his mother's brother, was a stanch Universalist, and was as uncompromising in his be-

liefs as the other members of the family; hence religious discussion became the principal topic of conversation, or, I should say, argument, in the home-circle. This state of affairs led to self-investigation, and being naturally introspective, the search for truth soon became a passion in the life of the young thinker. He joined first one church and then another, hoping thereby to find that which would satisfy his spiritual craving. There was something inspiring in the intensity with which he searched and groped for light in his life. Deep spiritual concentration and true desire for illumination were ingrained in his very soul. There was no compromise; above all else he wanted that thing that would put God into his every-day life, and so he went from church to church, from creed to creed, trying conscientiously to reconcile each in turn to the truth as he saw it. In 1849 we have record that he joined the Baptist Church and was baptized in the North River. Although he was not rewarded in what he sought in that faith, the law of compensation invariably operates, and perhaps, after all, it was fate which led him there. How often we have to wander in search of one thing to find that which we are not entirely aware of desiring! One Sunday morning while attending the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church he was listening to the sermon, no doubt a long-winded dissertation, when his attention became attracted to a

very beautiful young woman across the aisle. From that moment the discourse of the eminent divine had no further charms, and his eyes and attention were riveted on that beautiful face, which he has described to me often. He never tired of telling of that morning.

"George," he would say, "it was a dream. The beauty of that face and the graceful pose of that head were something that even Raphael could not have caught."

At the close of the service she hurried home. Close behind her followed the impetuous young lover, never losing sight of her for a moment until she disappeared into a little house on Varick Street.

In telling me of her feelings,—for I later knew the lady very well,—she said that when she realized that she was being followed she became greatly perturbed, and felt a tremendous sense of relief when the front door closed behind her; but curiosity getting the better of her, she peeped through the window-curtain and saw the dashing young stranger, with his long hair and flowing cloak, pace back and forth in front of the house. Then, to her astonishment, he mounted the steps. As she was alone in the house, she felt alarmed, but determined to respond to the call of the bell.

As the door swung open Inness saw the beautiful object of his affections, and with a low bow said:

"Pardon me; can you tell me if Miss Mary Inness lives here?" Mary was his sister, whom he had left only a few hours before in their home on Broome Street.

"No," she replied; "she does not. I have heard of Miss Inness, but I do not know where she lives."

With profuse thanks and another low bow, they parted. Pop was more enamored than ever. He rushed home and told his sister Mary that he had seen the most beautiful woman in the world and that he was going to marry her. After a brief, but no doubt vivid, description, Mary recognized the young woman as Elizabeth Hart, and through the pleading of George and the coöperation of a friend who knew Miss Hart, a party was arranged, and Miss Hart invited. Still in ignorance of the identity of the handsome stranger of the Sunday before and not connecting him with the party, Miss Hart accepted Miss Inness's invitation, and to her intense surprise found herself placed next to the mysterious gentleman at supper. That evening he escorted her home, and when he returned his father, who had been equally impressed with the beauty and charm of their new guest said:

"George, I 'd like you to marry that young lady."

"I 'm going to," replied Pop, and with the same impetuosity and passionate intensity which characterized everything he did in his life he lost no time in his courtship. In the supreme awakening of a great love all petty convention and all obstacles melted away, and these two stood face to face with a devotion as deep and true as life itself.

There was much opposition to this match on the part of her family. Her father had been lost at sea many years before, and her brothers, who were all older than she, opposed it vigorously because this presumptuous young upstart was an artist, and to marry an artist—well, one might as well marry a vagabond or a tramp and be done with it. Inness was forbidden the house. But that was of small consequence, as they were married a few weeks later, and throughout the forty-odd years of their life together the love that had so adventurously brought them together led them through the storms of life, sustaining them through evil days and good, growing deeper and more beautiful with each experience and each added year. The date of their marriage was 1850. She was seventeen, and he twenty-five.

Ogden Haggerty now proposed to my father to go abroad to study, defraying all the expenses, and soon after their marriage my mother and father sailed on their first ocean voyage. Father's health had been

Owned by Mrs. J. Scott Hartley

A WATER-COLOR DRAWING OF TREES

very poor, and the doctors recommended a long sea-voyage; so they went on a sailing-vessel. The journey took many weeks, and mother was the only woman on board. Not being a very good sailor, she was ill most of the way, and when they carried her up on deck as the ship was entering the Mediterranean, she said it seemed as though she had come out of a frightful dream and was entering paradise.

They stayed in Italy for two years. Father studied and painted eagerly, searching and studying the masters with an intensity and an eagerness which almost consumed him. While in Florence their first child, Elizabeth, was born. In 1852 they returned to this country, where another daughter was born, whom they named Rosa Bonheur, after the painter whom my father admired. In 1854 they crossed the ocean again, this time going to Paris, where they took up their residence in the Latin Quarter.

After the limited opportunities that my father had had in America these two trips to the art centers of the world, Italy and France, were a revelation, and of untold benefit to him. He came into immediate and close touch with the masters of the world through their works. It was at this time the Barbison school, having emerged victorious from the revolution of art and its threadbare traditions, was making itself felt in France, and my father came under its influence. To

say that he was directly influenced by any one of the men of 1830 would not be true, but he was undoubtedly deeply impressed by all of them. He studied their methods and technic with great interest and culled the best from each. But the point that I want to make is that the genius expressed in my father's pictures came from within, as direct inspiration, as must the work of all true genius, and whatever influence there was in his art life served only to awaken his own dormant emotions, which brought forth an expression entirely individualized. I honestly believe that my father thought that he could surpass any artist that ever lived. He has been accused of conceit, but was it really that in the common acceptance of the word? For, after all, he was a relentless critic of his own work. Was it not rather that high form of conceit, or lofty conviction, that he was called to a mighty destiny which he was in honor bound to fulfil? Was it not that sense of duty which some one has so beautifully expressed:

> Our wishes, it is said, do measure just
> Our capabilities. Who with his might
> Aspires unto the mountain's upper height,
> Holds in that aspiration a great trust
> To be fulfilled, a warrant that he must
> Not disregard, a strength to reach the height
> To which his hopes have taken flight.

What influence these immortal men of France and

England may or may not have had, they opened up new fields of vision and new avenues of thought. They took him out of the narrow confines of the Hudson River school, and placed him in the rarer atmosphere of the masters of the world. That indomitable spirit which burst through the bonds of commercial life into which my father's life seemed destined caused him to break away from the beaten track and blaze his own trail of light. He sought ever to interpret nature in its highest sense. Art with him was life itself; it was his religion. There was nothing in his life apart from it, and that supreme aspiration colored everything in his whole existence and gave his life an exquisite tone. It was the destiny for which he was created, and that destiny was never for the fraction of a moment lost sight of. It was the impulse that knows no denial.

Art was with him the expression of the inner life of the spirit. He said:

"The consciousness of immortality is wrapped up in all the experiences of my life, and this to me is the end of the argument. Man's unhappiness arises from disobedience to the monitions within him. The principles that underlie art are spiritual principles—the principle of unity and the principle of harmony.

"Christ never uttered a word that forbade the creating or the enjoying of sensuous form. The funda-

mental necessity of the artist's life is the cultivation of his moral powers, and the loss of those powers is the loss of artistic power. The efforts of the Catholic Church to excite the imagination of worshipers are admirable, because the imagination is the life of the soul. Art is an essence as subtle as the humanity of God, and, like it, is personal only to love—a stranger to the worldly minded, a myth to the mere intellect. I would not give a fig for art ideas except as they represent what I, in common with all men, need most—the good of our practice in the art of life. Rivers, streams, the rippling brook, hillsides, sky, and clouds, all things that we see, will convey the sentiment of the highest art if we are in the love of God and the desire of truth."

It is difficult to say which of all the men of Barbison ranked first in my father's estimation, for he said:

"As landscape-painters I consider Rousseau, Daubigny, and Corot among the very best. Daubigny particularly and Corot have mastered the relation of things in nature one to another, and have obtained the greatest works, representations more or less nearly perfect, though in their day the science underlying impression was not fully known. The advance already made is that science, united to the knowledge of the principles underlying the attempt made by those artists, will, we may hope, soon bring the art of land-

Owned by Mrs. J. Scott Hartley

STONE PINES
(Sepia drawing)

scape-painting to perfection. Rousseau was perhaps the greatest French landscape-painter, but I have seen in this country some of the smaller things of Corot which appeared to me to be truly and thoroughly spontaneous representations of nature, although weak in their key of color, as Corot always is. But his idea was a pure one and he had long been a hard student. Daubigny also had a pure idea, and so had Rousseau. There was no affectation in these men, there were no tricks of color. But the trouble with Rousseau was that he has too much detail. He 's little, he 's twopenny. He 's little with detail, and that takes away from his artistic worth."

My father was not over-enthusiastic about Corot, but thought he was a poet and a tonist. The man, I believe, who had the greatest influence on him was the English artist Constable, about whom he was very enthusiastic. I believe more of Constable shows in Inness's works than any of the French school.

He was a great admirer of Turner, but on one occasion when he attended an exhibition in a house in Fourteenth Street, New York, which formed the nucleus of the Metropolitan Museum, he saw the famous "Slave Ship" by Turner. My father looked at it, and with a gesture of disgust said:

"That is the most infernal piece of claptrap ever

painted. There is nothing in it. It has as much to do with human affections and thought as a ghost. It is not even a bouquet of color. The color is harsh, disagreeable, and discordant."

During this sojourn of my parents in Paris, I was born, and from that day it was decreed that I, too, should be a painter. In that year, 1854, we returned to America and located in Brooklyn, father taking a studio in New York and thus launching himself on his American career.

As I have already said in a previous chapter, in my father's boyhood he did not have to contend with financial difficulties, and the greatest obstacle in his way was the opposition of his family. Now, added to that opposition, which was by no means limited to his family, came financial troubles. The years were lean, and there was a growing family to support. At that time he was producing some of the pictures that have brought many thousands of dollars in recent sales in New York; but how glad he would have been to receive even one hundred then, in fact, to have sold them at all! For several years he struggled for recognition, but New York still held to the old school and would have none of him; so we moved to Boston, where, again through the help of Ogden Haggerty, Williams & Everett, prominent picture-dealers, took over the management of his pictures. We then took up our

residence in Medfield, a suburb of Boston, and times became better.

After our return to America a third daughter was born, whom they called Louise, and two years later my sister Helen was born, who became the wife of J. Scott Hartley, the sculptor. The sixth child, a boy, died in infancy.

CHAPTER III

MEDFIELD PERIOD

THE Medfield period lasted from 1859 to 1864. From the point of view of artistic achievements it was one of great importance in my father's life. The ideas which he had absorbed were now beginning to show in his work, and his own individual style was developing. In other words George Inness was beginning to be George Inness.

I do not remember how we got to Medfield, but I remember smelling wild flowers and fields for the first time. I remember also a quarrel with my sister Rose in which I came out victor. My father took me to the wood-shed and told me that any man who would strike a woman ought to be thrashed, and that he was going to whip me; and he did. He picked up a little twig, —it looked like the trunk of a tree,—and switched me well. I howled, and lay on the floor crying that he had hurt me; when I looked up I saw dear old Pop, sitting on a saw-horse crying, too. I could not understand. I am wiser now.

His tenderness and love for his family were beauti-

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

LIGHT TRIUMPHANT

ful. He sought to understand his children and to enter into our games and pleasures, and he would spend hours making kites and jackstraws for us. Again he would be in a different world, an entirely different man, and I would not know my father. As I review my childhood, a little incident flashes back to me of his tenderness. Father was very fond of roast pig, and I think he had been reading Charles Lamb. He would try anything he read about; when he read "The Count of Monte Christo" he tried hashish. I am glad to say he did not follow up the practice. But to the pig! Pop gave me a dollar to buy the runt from a farmer near by. To possess a runt had been my ambition, and for one dollar the farmer said he would give me one. That is pretty cheap for a pig. A runt is the smallest pig in a litter, but in my eyes this fellow was the finest little white pet in the world. I brought the little squealer home, and built a pen for him only because my mother would not let me have him for a bedfellow. I taught him to drink milk by letting him suck my finger as the farmer had shown me, and I washed him every day, and tucked him in a straw bed at night. He got so he would follow me like a dog, and I loved that pig; but I got chills and fever, and it was decreed that I should go to my aunt's in Tenafly, New Jersey, for a change.

After I had shivered my poor little body almost to

pieces and consumed quarts of "Coligog," I came home cured. After the usual family embraces were over, I hurried to the abode of my pet and found it deserted. I rushed to my father and cried:

"Oh, Pop, my runt is gone!"

Pop looked very shy and embarrassed, then said:

"Why, Georgie, he became a nuisance. We could not keep him in his pen,—I put him back a dozen times,—and then we had to eat him."

"Oh, why, why, did you eat my pig? Could n't you have nailed another slat on his pen?" I cried, and, leaving the room broken-hearted, went up in the attic, where I always took refuge when in trouble.

Before long I heard father trudging up-stairs. He called me to him and said: "You poor little chap! Of course I should have nailed another slat on his pen, but I never thought of it. Dry your eyes and come down-stairs, and I will get you a dog, and I promise you I will not eat him."

I was getting to be what my mother called a big boy, and father began to realize that I might be useful, so he showed me how to wash his brushes. I was a proud boy that day, but later sometimes felt that education has its drawbacks.

Then Mark Fisher came. Mark Fisher was a young fellow father found in a carriage-painter's shop in Boston. Mark was clever, and drew things, so

father brought him to live with us, and to learn to paint pictures. Mark did learn, and later became well known in England as an artist.

The coming of Mark was an event in my life, as it gave me more leisure to drill and march with our company, which was preparing for the war. You see, Mark washed the brushes. Speaking of the war, my father had some wooden guns made for our company, and I was to be captain; but discretion is the better part of valor, and I took second place and became a private, deferring to Foster Bush, our minister's son, who later became a distinguished physician of Boston. He was bigger than I. I always looked up to Mark Fisher as a great man. He used to draw funny pictures much better than father could. Mark had tendencies that might have led him to the drama. One night he produced a play in our dining-room. He hung a sheet across one end of the room, and invited the neighbors in to see him, Pop, and Mama play "Bombastes Furioso."

My father was the *King,* of course, Mark was *Bombastes,* and mama was Distaffena. I think an artist by name of Cass was *Fusbos.* My father was dressed in gorgeous clothes, and had a gold crown on his head. He was very fat. I saw him tie a pillow over his stomach before he put on his coat, which was made of a piece of carpet and some gold paper. Mark had a

sword with a blade about a foot broad, and when he stuck it "clean through" Pop, I let out a yell that nearly broke up the entire theater party.

A sport that my father loved was skating and we had many parties on the Charles River in winter. When Pop skated he wore a shawl—in fact, nearly all men wore shawls in those days—and with his long, black hair and plaid shawl floating in the breeze, he cut a figure that in my young eyes was the quintessence of grace.

On our place in Medfield there was an old barn which was converted into a studio. My father's studios were nearly always old barns; there was none of the poseur or dilettante about him. He was perfectly content with one chair, an easel, and his tubes of paint. He never had such things as attractive rugs or broken plates or bits of rags and silk about his place. He never could do clever tricks with his pencil to amuse, and never was attracted by the so-called artistic room with Oriental hangings, and used to ridicule old plates and cups and saucers and canopied divans and Japanese umbrellas. There was nothing luxurious about his studio; it was his workroom, and was simplicity almost to bareness.

In this old Medfield barn some of father's most representative pictures were painted; there he painted many of the magnificent sunsets and elms and those

MEDFIELD MEADOWS

dramatic storms which characterize George Inness. The original sketch of one of the finest examples of his work was done there. It was called "Medfield Meadows," and later was a wedding present from him to my wife and me.

Those were wonderful years for me. I used to sit there in his studio for hours at a time watching him paint, pictures now, not wash-tubs, while I, with a white canvas before me, a large brush, and a pail of water, imitated his movements.

When he painted he put all the force of his nature into it. Full of vim and vigor, he was like a dynamo. It was punch here and dab there. He was indefatigable. He was a totally different man in his studio from what he was out of doors. Out of doors he was quiet, rational, and absorbed. I have seen him sit in the same spot every day for a week or more studying carefully and minutely the contours of trees and the composition of the clouds and grass, drawing very carefully with painstaking exactness. But in his studio he was like a madman. He seldom painted direct from nature. He would study for days, then with a sudden inspiration would go at a canvas with the most dynamic energy, creating the composition from his own brain, but with so thorough an underlying knowledge of nature that the key-note of his landscapes was always truth and sincerity and absolute

fidelity to nature. It was his honesty and simplicity that made him great.

"Never put anything on your canvas that is n't of use," he would say; "never use a detail unless it means something." He would start a marine or shipwreck, and with a gesture of impatience would say, "Oh, confound it! that does n't look like water," and with a few swift strokes would put in some grass and trees, and more than likely, before he got through, it would be a snow-scene.

It was in the old barn studio that my father painted a large canvas called "The Sign of Promise." It makes me shudder to think how near this canvas came to being lost to the world. Some of it was, but, owing to the peculiar tendency to repaint canvases, some of the original, with more added, has been immortalized under the name of "Peace and Plenty." It now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It was a wheat-field, as I remember it, with a rainbow in the sky. Well, this canvas, "The Sign of Promise," got Pop and me into a good deal of trouble one day, especially Pop. I was working in a little garden where I had planted beans,—was just digging the beans up to see if they were growing,—when I heard the most terrible, muffled noise coming from the studio that sounded like "George"; but the voice was so strange and weird that I was frightened, and ran

into the house, and hid my face in the folds of my grandmother's apron. My mother was out at the time. I told between my sobs that there was something awful in the studio. While grandmother was trying to get her wits together, Pop appeared at the kitchen door, calling for me.

Grandmother said:

"Oh, George, don't punish him!" said my grandmother. "He 's so frightened."

Father answered:

"I shall not punish him, but I want to show him what his cowardice has caused me." When I looked up, there stood my father, his face streaked with color. We went hand in hand to the studio; there on the floor, face down, lay "The Sign of Promise." Pop explained to me that if I had not been such a little coward I could have removed the chair that, as he tried to kick it out of the way, had caused him to fall with his canvas, his face down, and into the palette, which he had no time to remove from his thumb. As he crawled from under the canvas a great deal of "The Sign of Promise" had come off on Pop's clothes. Not being able to dispose of this canvas, which has since become famous, in any other way, it was given in part payment for a house in New Jersey. I fancy that "Peace and Plenty" would now bring a good many houses like that one in New Jersey.

CHAPTER IV

MEDFIELD PERIOD II

THE Medfield days were war-times; the Civil War had just begun. My father was all enthusiasm. He was not fit for service, as he was not strong. I remember our fears when he went to be examined for enlistment, and the joy with which we received the news that he did not pass. But he worked hard in other ways. He raised money and men; he made speeches in front of the meeting-house nearly every night, and old Tom Barney, who kept the village store, and whom I met fifteen years later, told me my father went to Boston, borrowed one hundred dollars from an art dealer, rushed back to Medfield, and said: "Tom, they 've killed all our men. Take this, and send the poor fellows stockings." Tom added: "I done it conscientious; but I 've always wondered how they wore 'em."

Pop was a good fellow with the boys who hung around the village store and used to joke with them. Tom Barney was a quaint character, and in after years I spent many an hour listening to him as he drawled

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EVENING AT MEDFIELD

out "the queer things your father done and the yarns he used to tell." This was a pet story:

"George Inness was the smartest fellow that ever come to these parts; he was forever getting off somethin' on the boys, and he got one off on me oncet. You see, your father come down to the store one winter night when he knowed all the boys would be there, squirtin' terbacca juice into the sand-box under the store stove, and he says, 'Tom, I had a dream last night that 's worried me all day; and I 'd 'a' come down sooner if I had n't been so busy.' Of course he waited till he knowed all the boys 'u'd be around the stove. 'Well,' he says, 'I dreamed I died and I found myself standing in front of two roads. One was a great broad road, and t' other was nothin' much more 'n a cow-path. Well,' he says, 'I knowed where they went to, 'cause I remember mother used to tell me to take the crooked road, which led to heaven, for the beautiful straight road run straight into t' other place. Well,' says your father, 'I took the little crooked road, and after a while, after I was all het up and awful tired, for the road was full of stones and sticks and things, I come to a beautiful gate. Tom,' he says, 'it was all stuck around with jewels and gold, and the light that came from it just blinded me. I knowed,' said he, 'it was the gate of heaven, but I was scared to knock, 'cause I thought maybe they would n't let me in. But

after a spell,' says he, 'I got my courage up an' knocked at the door. Pretty soon,' he says, 'a feller come to the gate and opened it just a crack-like, and he says, "Who be you?" Tom,' says your father, 'it was Saint Peter. I knowed him 'cause he carried a big key; the old masters in Europe always painted him with a big key in his hand. Well, St. Peter says,' says he, ' "Who be you?" and I says, "George Inness." He says, "Don't know yer. Where 'd yer come from, and what 's yer trade?" I says, "I come from Medfield, Massachusetts, and I 'm an artist." Tom, when I said that,' says your father, 'Saint Peter give a jump and said, "Mercy! What you a-doin' here? We don't let no artists in here; you take the other road down the hill. You 'll find plenty of your kind down there." I says,' says he, ' "O Saint Peter, don't send me down there! I know where it leads to,—my mother told me,—and I don't like artists." "Oh, yer don't," says Saint Peter. "Be yer a Christian?" Well, Tom,' says your father, 'that was a blow that floored me. I could n't say I was a Christian, and I dares n't say I were n't; so I says, "Not as they count a Christian in Medfield; I don't belong to no church." ' At that, so your father says, Saint Peter shet the gate in his face. 'Well,' he goes on, 'I set on a stone outside awhile, and cried, 'cause I did n't want to go down

among the artists; so I plucked up my courage, and knocked on the gate again, and when Saint Peter come once more, I said, "I just knocked again to say I know a Christian." "You do?" says he. "Well, do tell! What 's his name and where 's he from?" "His name," says I, "is Tom Barney." "Don't know no such Christian," says Saint Peter. "You don't?" says your father, "why he 's the pillar of the Baptist Church in Medfield." "Oh, yes," says Saint Peter, "I recollect him now. He 's deacon in the Baptist Church, and, let me see, he keeps a grocery store, don't he? Yes, he 's a Christian all right. So you know Tom Barney, pillar of the Baptist Church, do you? Say, have you knowed him long? About three years, you say? Do you trade to his store? Yer have, have yer? Well, in them three years you 've been tradin' with Tom Barney, the pillar of the Baptist Church, did you ever suspect—that is, did you ever think that maybe, sometimes, there was a leetle too much sand in the sugar?" "Oh, no," says your father, "I never suspected any such thing." "Well," says Saint Peter, "if you 've traded with Tom Barney, pillar of the Baptist Church of Medfield for three years, and are such a' innocent damned fool as not to know Tom was cheating you right along, come right in. You can't do no harm!" '

"Of course," said Tom, "your father was only fool-

ing, and only said it to make the boys laugh; but I never done it no more."

In Medfield father worked a great deal out of doors, studying nature, and often when I was not at school we tramped long distances with our packs on our backs and a lunch in our pockets. I had a sketch-book, and used to draw trees and fences, while father painted some of the pictures that are to-day attracting so much attention. Although not more than nine years of age I had wisdom enough to examine him before we started out, for I had learned by sad experience and weary little legs that my parent was absent-minded, and frequently got a mile from home before he would discover that he had no paint-rags or was out of yellow ochre; then I would have to tramp home for them.

He was so absent-minded that it was positively dangerous for him to go out alone. He was very deep—that is, in another world. One could not always place him. To jump ahead of my story, I remember on many occasions when we lived in Montclair and my children were little tots, they would come in and tell me that they had met their grandfather on the strèet, and hailed him, after the manner of children, "Hello, Grandfather!" and grandfather would say: "Ah, hello, little girl! Whose child are you, George's or Helen's?"

And he sometimes did not know his own children.

He went over to Brooklyn one day to see his sister. He had just returned from Europe, and upon inquiry as to how many children he had, he replied:

"I don't know. Lizzie will be here soon; she knows."

On one of Pop's trips to Boston mother asked him to buy a pair of shoes for one of the children, and gave him explicit instructions. When he returned, instead of bringing the shoes, he had sent home a case of shoes, of all sizes and colors, for which he had exchanged a picture. He explained to my mother that the children would grow into them. Another time when she asked him to buy her a few earthenware pie-plates he sent home a hogsheadful.

The years in Medfield were lean financially. Pictures were not selling fast or steadily, and when they did, they brought very little. Although father had more success in Massachusetts than in New York, our lives were not exactly pampered by the luxuries that generally flow from a full purse, and I fancy that the flour in the barrel was pretty low at times. However, my father was happy in the profession that he loved and the wife whom he adored. My mother was a very beautiful woman, and with it all displayed a gentleness and wisdom that had a wonderful influence on my father's life. He was high-strung, nervous, reckless, and generous to a fault. I believe he would

have given the coat on his back to help any one in distress.

Sometimes I have seen my mother, with her beautiful Grecian face, hovering over a kitchen stove; but generally we had a hired girl. Money, with an artist, is like fits; it comes occasionally, and when it comes, comes with a jolt that sets a reckless man on a steel-trust pinnacle. One day while in Boston my father got the jolt, and immediately repaired to a jewelry-shop. I do not know how much he got for the pictures, but I do know that he brought home to the beautiful mother of his children a diamond necklace. He clasped it around my mother's neck.

"O George," she exclaimed, "how beautiful! O my dear, the wish of my life has been to possess a diamond necklace." Everything was happiness that evening, and to celebrate the great occasion the children were allowed to sit up later than usual.

A few days after this my father said:

"Lizzie, why don't you wear your necklace? I have n't seen it around your neck since the night I brought it to you."

My mother replied:

"Why, how would I look with a diamond necklace and this calico gown? It would be out of place. Some day before long, when our ship comes in, you will get me a velvet gown, and we will go to New

York and to the reception at the Academy of Design, and I can wear the necklace and show people how proud I can be as the wife of the great genius."

But father was not satisfied. He insisted that she was the most beautiful woman God had ever made, and he wanted to see how her beautiful neck would show off a diamond necklace. Then mother put her arms about his neck and said:

"Dear husband, I have not got the necklace."

"Not got the necklace! What in the world has become of it?"

"You see, dear, I went to Boston the next day, and the jeweler gave me the money you paid for it, and I put it in the bank."

My father clasped her in his arms and sobbed:

"You are the best little wife a man ever had."

CHAPTER V

THE EAGLESWOOD PERIOD

IF the Medfield days were deeply significant of my father's art development, the next stage of his life, which I might term the Eagleswood period, was more significant in spiritual unfolding. Father had been persuaded by Marcus Spring to leave Massachusetts and go to Eagleswood, New Jersey, a suburb of Perth Amboy, where Spring built him a house, taking "Peace and Plenty" in part payment.

A short time before this the Baptist religion had gone the way of all others, and he was again adrift; but at last he thought he had found what he wanted: he would go back to his mother's church. She was a Methodist and a good woman, so he joined the ranks of the Methodists, and was happy for a while. One Sunday he took me to church. It was a very hot day, and I do not remember what the sermon was about, but there were lots of damns and hells in it, mixed up with brimstone and fire. I looked over at Pop. He was agitated, and the perspiration was streaming from his face. He stood it as long as he could, then, taking me by the hand, said:

Wife of George Inness

George Inness, 1862

George Inness, 1862

George Inness, Jr., 1862

SOME FAMILY PORTRAITS

"Come, Georgie, let 's get out of here. We made a mistake, and got into hell."

Fortunately for my father, William Page, the portrait-painter, a one-time president of the Academy of Design, was living at Eagleswood when we moved there. They became warm friends, and Page brought to my father the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg. This philosophy came at the time of his life when he most needed something to lift him out of himself and the limited doctrines of orthodox creeds. He threw himself into its teachings with all the fire and enthusiasm of his nature, and although he did not adhere strictly to its tenets, it led to other metaphysical research, and he at last truly found that form of expression for which he had searched throughout his life—the consciousness of God in his soul manifested in every experience of his life.

During the latter part of his life he wrote constantly on these subjects, though few things were published. He was full of theories of art, religion and ethics, and would talk theory and preach theory to all who would listen to him. It made no difference whether they agreed with him or even understood; he kept right on talking theory. I have seen him pin a man to a chair and pound his ideas into him for hours at a time until he and his listener were both exhausted. One summer when my father and mother were visiting

me at St. Andrews, New Brunswick, they met Sir William Van Horne, a most charming and cultivated Canadian gentleman. One evening after dinner my father cornered Sir William, and for hours poured into him his theories of Swedenborg, Henry George, the single tax, and paint, pounding each word in with a jab of his forefinger, until the poor fellow, in utter desperation, tore himself away and retired. The next morning when Sir William went out on the piazza he found father in the same chair and in the same attitude as when he had left him. Catching sight of Van Horne, father picked up the thread of discourse where he had left off the night before, and went on with his lecture. Sir William confided to me that he wondered if my father had kept it up all night, not knowing that he had gone to bed.

The single tax was a theme that interested my father very much. It was one of his pet theories. In telling me the foregoing story, Sir William was reminded of another, à propos of this topic.

"I entertained at dinner a number of distinguished Australians," he said, "among them an eminent publicist. The single tax excites much ridicule and discussion in Australia, and your father, as you know, had become an ardent Georgite. The talk at dinner turned upon the tax, and the Australian view was expounded at length by the distinguished publicist.

Inness sat silent, his burning, black eyes under his black and shaggy fell of hair, fixed upon the orator, who talked the more complacently in the consciousness of so appreciative a listener. When his arguments were exhausted and the speaker paused, Inness shot from his seat, and thrust his forefinger into the speaker's face with, 'Did you mean what you said?' Then followed the most amazing exhibition of reasoning and logic I have ever witnessed. With a display of memory and a grasp of understanding that was marvelous to see, Inness brought up every statement the great publicist had made, showing his utter clumsiness of reasoning, putting his logic to confusion, and exposing his falsity of statement.

"After propounding his theories with a conviction that made the audience speechless, your father rounded up those giant Australians like so many sheep, and literally drove them into the drawing-room. I have never seen anything like it," said Sir William. "It was amazing the way he silenced that speaker with facts. It was too good to be true."

It was not with any idea of establishing a religion for the whole world that he went into theological subjects; nor did he condemn the old order of things for those who found spiritual food in them. It was simply to find God in the way that brought satisfaction to himself; for in one of his manuscripts he says:

No man can possibly know what is good for another; he can only enjoy and give of what he enjoys through the connected ministrations of the human race. Error is in giving voice to the states that are not enjoyed. This science is bound to be correct. For the word of Good (God) cannot be perverted without punishment. "As ye think, so are ye."

It can be only through the awakening perception of scientific genius firmly grounded in religious conviction that such a science—for a science it must be, though unlimited—can become a possibility. Much has been said about a scientific religion, and many appear to have hoped for it; but a new system of faith can be formed only upon what has preceded it, and to be a religious faith it must be in accord with the universal bond of human sentiment. Science, even unlimited, cannot make a faith any more than it can make a soul. Its truths serve only to confirm. A spiritual science must be an inspiration from or through the religious mind into the scientific mind.

His liberality of thought is expressed in the following passage:

Its forms [of expression] may be various, but from its center comes the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

If we accept the philosophy that man was made in the image and likeness of God, our hope of attaining an idea of God or the infinite cause for which science is searching is not only by investigating or classifying material forms, but by subjecting such classification to laws or principles inherent as the properties or attributes of the reasoning mind. Let us endeavor, then, to clothe or illustrate an idea of the mind or thought in a form fitted to material comprehension by considering such idea as a point or center from which are

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PEACE AND PLENTY

intellectual radiations, in fact, as the reality or truth of a center of motion.

Such a point can be considered only as the creation of being itself, which being is in us the affection or touch of life, felt as the consciousness of something existing as a substantial entity, which I appreciate as an idea from myself as an active center of thought, yet my idea proceeds from my peculiar affection of form of life, hidden from my understanding, partaking of its quality or substance, and from it radiates my thought, propelled by the extension of my life, creating in my ultimate act ideas of sensation or conviction of that which is not me, but which confirms me as an individual center, or the idea of selfhood.

There was only one subject that I know of that Page and my father disagreed upon; that subject was what they called "the middle tone." Now, the middle tone was Page's idea. He claimed that the horizon should be a middle tone: that is, it should be half-way between the lightest light and the greatest dark in the picture. Father agreed with him on that point, but what they could not agree upon was just what a middle tone really was. So Page, to explain more fully, took a strip of tin and painted it white at one end and black at the other, and then graded in stripes from both ends until it reached a gray tone in the middle. This he showed to my father and said triumphantly, "There 's the true middle tone!" The next day father went to Page's studio with a similar strip of tin and declared that he had the true middle tone. When they

compared the two hues, there was no resemblance between them. Then the fight was on, and these two gentlemen, after yelling themselves hoarse and saying some very uncomplimentary things to each other, would break away, and not speak to each other for days. Then they would come together again and resume the argument with renewed vigor. These hostilities were kept up, off and on for two years, when Page built himself a house on Staten Island and painted it white, then glazed it down to a middle tone. In a few months the sun had faded out the middle tone; at which my father declared that there was no such thing as a middle tone, anyhow, and that Page was a fool.

While at Eagleswood there were many artists who congregated around my father, and he had some pupils. Louis C. Tiffany was one, and Carleton Wiggins another.

About this time a syndicate of gentlemen, Fletcher Harper, Chauncey Depew, Clarke Bell, and others, gave my father a commission to paint a series of large pictures, and he chose for subjects "Bunyon's Pilgrim's Progress." There were several pictures.

I remember "The Delectable City" and "The Valley of the Shadow of Death." The latter, I believe,

is in the Brooklyn Art Museum, and belonged to Fletcher Harper.

One of the canvases was destroyed in the Chicago fire, and another, the "Delectable City," was destroyed or damaged in an accident at the Madison Square Garden.

When the "Valley of the Shadow of Death" was exhibited a criticism appeared in one of the papers that said the subject was overdone, that Inness had made it horrible by painting the rocks to resemble hideous forms, reptiles and goblins. My father, when reading it, said: "Nonsense! I did not paint any such things"; but when he saw the picture again, he declared that they did seem to take such shapes.

In 1867 we moved from Eagleswood to Brooklyn, where several more or less uneventful years were passed. My father was painting steadily. Two incidents stand out as significant. The most important was father's election to the Academy of Design in 1868. In 1853 he had been made an Associate, and it took the academy fifteen years to realize that he was worthy of full honors.

The other incident was more in the nature of a humorous situation, yet how well it pictures dear old Pop! He was very proud of me, not because I was clever and smart, because I was not, but just because

I was his. In fact, I was very dull in school, and always in a grade far beneath me in years and size. I attended the Adelphi Academy at the time when Mr. Lockwood was the principal. He was a very kind gentleman, and indulged me because he looked upon me as rather lacking, and would let me spend most of my time in the studio, where I was a great favorite with the drawing-master. I was about fourteen years of age when my father found this out, and took me to the Polytechnic, and the interview with Dr. Cochran was rather amusing. Father hated this sort of thing, and would have had my mother take me to the new school, but she said it was a man's duty, and he must see Dr. Cochran and explain about the studio. Father was very nervous and embarrassed, and, as was his custom when embarrassed, he put on an air of gruffness to cover up his confusion.

We were ushered into a little office. After waiting a few moments, a dapper little man, emaculately groomed, just as if he were out of a bandbox, came in and made a stately bow, at which my father arose, and in a very rough voice said:

"Dr. Cochran?" which brought forth another bow from the doctor.

"Well, Doctor Cochran, I 've brought this boy down here to see if you can drive some learning into him. I want him to learn to read and write. He 's been up

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THE DELAWARE VALLEY

at the Adelphi Academy, and has n't learned anything. I don't believe he 's a fool exactly, but they 've let him have his own way too much. Been spending most of his time in the studio."

"Ah," said the doctor, "has the young man a bent for art?"

"Yes, I suppose he has."

"Well, would it not be better to encourage any strong tendency in that direction that the young man may have?"

"Ah, I 'll attend to all that when the time comes," answered my father in a gruff voice.

"Ah, then," said the doctor, who was growing impatient with the uncouth manners of his visitor, "may I ask if you are in a position which enables you to develop his art tendencies?"

"I am; I am a painter myself."

"Ah, indeed. I beg your pardon. I did n't understand. I know most of our artists, but, never having met you, may I inquire the name?"

"My name is Inness."

"Not George Inness?"

"Yes, George Inness."

"The landscape-painter?"

"Yes," replied my father, "I am a landscape-painter."

At this the whole manner of the doctor changed.

His face glowed with interest as he sprang up and grasped my father by the hand.

"Mr. Inness," he said, "I cannot express to you the pleasure of this meeting. I have known your work for years, and have followed it with most intense interest. In fact, on several occasions I have prided myself on the ability to recognize your work whenever I saw it, and on one occasion I entered into a bet with some gentlemen that I could pick out a George Inness among a hundred other works. The bet was for a dinner, and I won the bet."

Then my father seemed to turn into another man, another being entirely. He forgot all about me and his mission; his embarrassment left him. He nailed the doctor to a chair, and with many gesticulations drove into him his theories of art and religion. The doctor sat perfectly still, not uttering a word until my father, becoming quite exhausted from his exertions, said:

"Well, Doctor Cochran, I fear I have taken too much of your valuable time. Will you take the boy?"

"Go right on, Mr. Inness; I am intensely interested in what you say. It is a revelation to me, and I want to say that I never heard a better sermon in my life. Of course we will take the boy, and I promise you that he shall have nothing to do with the studio. I am perfectly sure he will find a competent master when the proper time comes."

CHAPTER VI

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

CONCLUDING that foreign subjects would be more salable than domestic ones, Williams & Everett induced my father to go abroad, agreeing to take his pictures at stated sums. So in the spring of 1870 we sailed for the Old World, landing at Liverpool.

We stopped in London and Paris only a few days on our way to Marseilles, where we embarked for Civitavecchia, going from there to Rome. In Rome my father took a studio on the Via Sistina said to have been once occupied by Claude Lorrain. Our first summer in Italy was spent in Tivoli, where father made many sketches of the famous olive-groves of that village, reputed to be over a thousand years old. We spent two summers at Perugia, one at Albano, and one at Pieve di Cadore, the birthplace of Titian, whom my father thought the greatest colorist that ever lived.

Pop always had a romantic streak in him, and took great pleasure in visiting the birthplaces of famous men. He liked to browse around in the old places where they lived and painted, and to live

over in his imagination the lives of these great masters.

What a time he would have had, had he lived in the time of Titian, and had had a score or two of pupils, as those fellows had! I can imagine him, mahlstick in hand, directing the building of a picture. He would have mapped it out as a great general does a battle, then he would have directed detachments of his army of pupils to attack the huge canvas at different points. "There, A——, slam in a thunder-cloud in the right-hand corner; and you, B——, rush a battery of light down in that middle distance; and C——, keep hammering away at the foreground. Never mind if you are out of tone, we 'll get a harmony when we put a glaze over the whole thing, and then with a little tickling up here and there with pigment we will have finished the greatest landscape that ever was painted." And this is not all imaginary, for that was one of my father's pet theories. He thought he could direct any man or group of men to paint in this way, and produce as great a picture as he could paint himself. At times he seemed to be obsessed with the idea that painting a picture was purely mechanical, needing only the master brain to direct. But with Pop theory and practice were not always one and the same thing, although in some instances he did actually put this particular theory into practice. I have seen him preach this theory by the hour and bring forth the most logical ar-

From the Butler collection in The Art Institute of Chicago

THE CATSKILL MOUNTAINS

guments to prove that he was correct in his deductions, then under the fire of inspiration throw theories, arguments, and everything to the four winds, and paint like mad in exact opposition to the ideas he had expressed, finally admitting that, after all, "The fellow who gets the bird is the fellow who holds the gun."

If any one would criticize my father's works, even though he did not know where the next meal or house rent was coming from, he would blow out in a passion of abuse and lose a sale. On one occasion Marshall O. Roberts, a big New York financier, came to his studio in Rome. Father had two canvases which he held at five thousand dollars each, and which pleased Mr. Roberts very much.

"Mr. Inness," he said, "if I take both of those pictures, what price will you make me?"

"Ten thousand dollars," my father replied.

"Well, Mr. Inness, what is the price of the little one on the easel?"

"Two thousand dollars," answered Pop.

"Will you take ten thousand dollars for the three?"

Pop agreed, although the commercial aspect of the transaction rankled, and the bargain was made, the purchase to be consummated on Mr. Roberts's return to Rome from a tour of Egypt.

The next day a member of the Roberts family came to see the pictures. He was very much delighted,

and expressed himself as being greatly pleased that they at last were to have some real art for their home in New York.

"But," he said, "the old gentleman is kicking at the price he has to pay."

At this my father burst out:

"Tell the gentleman he is an ass to talk about my prices when he has been paying much larger sums for the greatest trash that ever was put on canvas."

Evidently the message was delivered to Mr. Roberts, as requested, and—well, he just forgot to stop in Rome on his return from Egypt.

Father never could learn to be politic. Another time when a prospective purchaser criticized something in a picture which he was considering, father told him not to make an idiot of himself by talking of something he was absolutely ignorant of. The sale was not made, and father's rent was still due.

I have to laugh when I recall these incidents, which were then so tragic. I remember General Alger said to me:

"Your father was a very violent man, was he not?"

"My father? Why, no; he was as gentle as a lamb."

"Oh," he replied, "I got a very different opinion of him. At one time I found occasion to criticize one of his pictures and—"

"Oh," I laughed; "I understand."

And another time when a man who is known to be one of the world's richest magnates came to Pop's studio, he admired a certain canvas extravagantly and asked the price, which was given him as two thousand dollars.

The gentleman, after admiring it for some time, said:

"Mr. Inness, I will give you fifteen hundred for it."

Father went to the easel, removed the canvas, and turned it face to the wall.

"Oh, hold on, Mr. Inness; I should like to look at that picture again."

"You will have to excuse me," replied father, "I am not selling pictures to-day. I am very busy, and will bid you good day."

After our stay in Italy we moved on to France, making our headquarters in Paris, where father had his studio. He was still painting for Williams & Everett. One picture was exhibited at the Salon, an Italian subject; but it was "skyed" and attracted little attention. The first summer in France was spent at Etretat.

In the latter part of 1872 came the disastrous fire in Boston, which forced Williams & Everett to suspend payment to my father, and we found ourselves again without money. Pop was now compelled to make a

hurried trip back to the States, leaving us in Paris until he could make some financial arrangement similar to the one with Williams & Everett. He cabled Williams & Everett to send him money, as the following letter indicates:

LIVERPOOL, Feb. 13, 1873

My Dear Wife:

I have just received your two letters and hasten to answer a few lines before leaving for the boat. Do not worry about me, as I am well provided for and am all right. I presume that you have received the letter I wrote from London.

I shall be quite as well satisfied if the $1,000 is not sent, if you have enough, until I can reach Boston, as it will leave me free to make other arrangements if desirable. Williams will probably be desirous of making overtures to me, and in case the money is paid I shall feel delicate in working from one party to another. As soon as I reach Boston I will find out how things are and telegraph you money.

Give my love to all and believe me your

Affectionate husband,

Fear nothing,

GEORGE.

Satisfactory arrangements were not made with Williams & Everett, however, and father entered into a business arrangement with Doll & Richards, another Boston firm.

Before leaving Paris my mother had given poor old Pop very explicit directions as to his appearance, and told him that she had packed his dress clothes in the

Owned by Mrs. J. Scott Hartley

OLIVE TREES AT TIVOLI

bottom of his trunk. She further admonished him to take them out immediately upon his arrival in Boston, and have them pressed, as he would very probably be invited out.

"Now remember, dear, take them out. Don't forget. And remember to put on a clean shirt and collar. You know you are very careless, and if I am not there to look after you I don't know what will happen."

He promised faithfully to carry out these instructions, and to make quite as much of a dandy of himself as when he was courting her.

Some months later Mr. Maynard of Boston told me of a dinner which he gave Pop soon after he arrived in Boston.

"The dinner," he said, "was a large one, and I had invited the élite to meet our greatest artist, George Inness, who had just returned from Europe. The guests arrived, and dinner was announced, but the guest of honor had not come. We waited, and I became very nervous. The steward was growing very impatient, the dinner was getting cold, and I was almost beside myself. Finally I had to take my guests to the dining-room. We all sat rather glum; occasionally one would tell a story of some eccentric fellow he had known, and as the soup and then the fish was served, we told some more, and after the en-

trée and the roast had gone, of tales of accident and death; when suddenly the doors flew open, and there stood our guest, George Inness. He was quite out of breath and exclaimed:

" 'I beg your pardon, Maynard. I am late, I fear; but the fact is I forgot all about the dinner. But never mind; I 'll join in right here. No, thank you; nothing, please. I got my dinner at a little restaurant before I remembered. I 'll just have some dessert.' His hair was disheveled, and the little pea-jacket that he was wearing was stained with spots of paint; but he began to talk, and he talked and talked as never man talked before. Of color, God, tone, the triumph of the mind, and of Swedenborg, and when the party finally broke up, every guest was in a state of delight. No matter whether we followed him or not, he was most entertaining. His gestures, which at times threatened to play havoc with the china, were eloquent. The dinner was a great success, and I would not have missed it or had it different for the greatest picture he could paint."

We joined him soon after this in Boston. When father signed the agreement with the firm of Doll & Richards, he did so without reading it, and if he had, I doubt if he would have understood what it meant, with its whereases, parties of the first part, parties of the second part, to wits, and to have and to holds, so help

me Gods, etc.; but the gist of the agreement was that Doll & Richards should control all of Inness's works, and, if I remember right, all of his sketches, tools, and everything that was his, for which they were to guaranty him a certain sum per month. Things went well for a few months, and then payments stopped.

I happened to be present when Doll came to the studio and told father that he could sell nothing, and therefore could give him no more money; and asked him if he could not sell something himself. To which father replied that, if he could, he certainly would not be paying the firm of Doll & Richards to do it for him. Things were pretty bad, and one day Mr. Maynard came to Pop with the story that Doll had said to him that he had the knife in Inness and could twist it at any time, and advised father to get everything away from the firm as soon as possible. We were all excited. Father went to his old friends, Williams & Everett, who agreed to give him four thousand dollars and take certain canvases as security, among them "The Barberini Pines," which was then in our studio, and which now hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Then he went to New York to see what arrangements could be made with John Snedecor, his old New York dealer.

Meanwhile Mr. Maynard advised me to get the large picture away as soon as possible, so Williams &

Everett sent a man around to the studio that evening, and he and I carried the big canvas down Washington Street to Williams & Everett's store. While I was gone, Doll, having discovered that my father had gone to New York with four thousand dollars from Williams & Everett, hurried around to the studio and broke in the door. When he found the big picture gone, he rushed off to Maynard and declared that George Inness was an absconder and a thief and that he would have him locked up. Then the chase began, and Doll caught him at my uncle's home in Brooklyn. Doll was armed with a warrant, and threatened to lock him up before night if he did not hand over the four thousand dollars.

Poor old Pop would probably have given it to him in his fright had not my uncle found a magistrate to accept his bond. Then "The Barberini Pines," for safe-keeping, was sent to Snedecor's in New York, but Doll got scent of it, and placed an attachment on it.

I then went to a lawyer in Boston with the Doll agreement. The attorney said it would not hold. No man could deed away his life. That had been proved in Venice years ago. The case was finally settled out of court, and Doll & Richards got "The Barberini Pines."

My father did not return to Boston. He deter-

Property of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

BARBARINI PINES

mined to try the New York field once more, and I stayed in Boston to close up the business, joining him later.

"The Barberini Pines" was one of those pictures painted according to the theory I have described. It was done by J. A. S. Monks, me, and Pop. I put Jack first and then bring in myself because Pop painted on it last. But I doubt if Jack could find the part he painted; as for my part, I give up all claim to having helped the master. Jack Monks was a pupil of my father while we were in Boston, and we three worked together in the studio over the Boylston Bank on Washington Street. Jack is now a celebrated painter of Boston.

The Boston "Transcript" some years ago published the following interview with Jack Monks:

Mr. Monks' acquaintance with the master began in a way that he is naturally and honestly proud to recall. Inness had dropped into the studio of George N. Cass and his eye had fallen upon the realistic study of a willow tree.

"Who painted that?" he demanded in his brusk manner.

"A pupil of mine, a young beginner named Monks," replied Cass.

"Tell him to come over and see me."

A few days later young Monks presented himself at the new studio of Inness. His first reception at interrupting the eccentric painter at his work was somewhat disconcerting, but as soon as it was explained that he was the painter of the willow tree at Cass's, the great man's manner instantly

changed; he begged the young man to move in at once and bring over all of his things, and when this was done requested him to place his easel in the same room, to help himself to materials, overhaul the sketches, and in all ways to treat the premises as his own. This intimate companionship lasted throughout Inness's residence in Boston, including a painting campaign in the White Mountains, and was renewed later when both artists were in New York City.

Mr. Monks' affectionate reverence for his great master is unbounded, but he admits that his advice and teaching were not seldom bewildering. It was as difficult for the younger man to follow the elder's instructions as to model any particular methods upon so erratic and many-sided a style. One day Inness would insist that the foundation or keynote of every landscape should be black; another day it would be red that he believed to be the true basis. Having had the advantage of no technical or academic instruction he was continually sounding about and feeling his way for himself through intense ratiocination on art and ceaseless studies of nature. He often lamented this lack of early experience in the school work of art, and acknowledged that it would have been a shorter cut to his tardy success and have saved him an incalculable amount of labor and discouragement while he was thus finding out the limitations and possibilities of painting. But it may well be questioned whether quite the same results of his powerful inventiveness and originality would have been developed had he been spared the struggles which finally matured his Titanic strength.

Inness painted very rapidly, and if his pictures could have been taken away from him at the proper moment, Mr. Monks says, he would have completed a painting a day. But he would follow a sunset through its successive phases, until it became a maze of contradictions. He would sometimes

change a broad sunlight effect of one day into a moonlight or "gray day" the next. He would paint from a sketch two years old with the same fervor, or more, than he would paint before nature; and yet he was a most faithful and ardent student of nature, and would dwell with tremendous force and effect upon the minutest details when he felt them to be essential to an effect or when making studies for future use. On the other hand he would revel in the "interpretation," as he called it, of the merest pencil sketch of another artist, or in painting from a few wild scratches of his own made at random to see what he could evolve from them. Per contra, he once studied with enormous care an oak tree against a brilliant sunset, painting the leaves so that they almost seemed to rustle. He could get more varieties of foliage into a picture, so as to be distinguished even in the distance, than any painter of our day. He had a touch for each kind of tree that expressed it instantly and perfectly. In painting a large picture before a great subject, as for instance Mount Washington, he would change it every day, so sensitive and receptive was he to every impression and eager to include every phase, and leave it at the last a mass of "mud." At a safe distance, however, both of space and time, and with only his notes to rely upon he would complete a masterpiece upon the same subject.

"I well remember," said Mr. Monks, "the day we went out to make our first sketch together. He gave minute instructions about drawing in the lines and frotting in the masses and we went to work. After an hour of diligent silence, Mr. Inness came around to my picture and exclaimed, 'By Jove, you 've got it better than I.' Then he added, 'Now paint in the mountain solid for background,' and when this instruction, diametrically opposed to what had preceded, had been executed, with the dire result to be foreseen under any ordi-

nary methods of painting, the hilarity of the great man at the tyro's discomfiture was like that of a mischievous boy." Another characteristic incident was the scene in the Boston studio at the execution of the great Inness canvas intended for the Philadelphia exhibition—which, by the way, was not sent. He had brought home from Italy the study for the picture—which represented the grounds of a palace or villa overlooking the Mediterranean with an imposing procession of straight stone pines, which was always a favorite effect of his. He wanted a new sky painted into this picture, and Monks and his son George were given a large quantity of the blue color selected, and, mounting stepladders, worked carefully the whole sky over, while Inness busied himself below on the foreground. Towards night the result of this triplicate effort was viewed through a looking-glass, and through the legs of the painters, according to the custom of artists, and the atmospheric effect pronounced simply immense. The next morning Inness rose at an early hour and before either of his collaborators had arrived, the entire sky had been changed to a gray and with it the whole color scheme of the picture.

Inness was not, Mr. Monks says, as might be supposed from the fluency of his utterance and the vigor of his thinking on many subjects, an incessant talker at his work. When he talked it was always on some question of the principles of art or some phase of nature; it was never about himself or anybody else. He had no personal gossip or small talk about his contemporaries, no envy, jealousy or grudges, although at times his criticism was severe, and even savage upon popular favorites; entirely on general grounds, however, and from serious conviction, not spite. He was nobody's fool in business matters, but was generous to a remarkable degree towards any cause or person interesting him. His considera-

tion and painstaking in the teaching he gave Mr. Monks (he never took pupils as a regular thing, he would never have a customer even in his studio that he did not like) are looked back to now as something beautiful and extraordinary by its recipient. He once came to his studio when business was blue with the young painter, and within two hours a dealer had been sent who cheered things up; but Inness absented himself for a fortnight in order not to be thanked.

CHAPTER VII

NEW YORK

OUR nomadic life had not been without benefit, for the influences gathered at different points had developed my father's own style, and when he returned to New York he found that even there his weight was beginning to be felt, although financially he was by no means out of the woods. In our various wanderings we had not yet found the elusive haven known as "Easy Street."

Times were still hard for both of us, Pop selling a picture occasionally for a small bit, and I making a sort of living at illustrating. More than once in those years I had to loan my father my watch to pawn with his, so that the rent might be paid. But how rich those years were in other things! Grand achievements, grand ideas immortalized on canvas! Grand companionship with my father!

Of these later days I can talk much more intimately because the threads of my own life are so interwoven with those of his. These things were of vital interest and concerned me often as truly as they did him, par-

ticularly in New York, where I, too, was reaching out for self-expression along the same lines. As I sit here and write of those days a flood of memories comes back to me. I can see my father so plainly in all phases of his life. Many-sided, versatile Pop! Truly a contradiction, as gentle as a lamb and as ferocious as a lion. Sensitive, introspective, absent-minded, and yet light-hearted and fun-loving and under all conditions consumed with a passionate belief in his own destiny and an intense desire for its fulfilment. No matter what his mood, the desire for self-expression surmounted everything. Nor was his expression limited to paint and canvas. The same happy, joyous mood that produced one of his fresh spring landscapes, telling of love and immortality, brought from his pen this poem, called Exaltation:

Sing joyfully!
Earth-bound no more,
We rise.
Creation speaks anew
In brighter tones.
Life now enthrones
Its imaged forms,
Winged with a joy that
Ne'er from nature grew.

Sing joyfully!
The Lord has come.
We live.

Released, the spirit flies,
Robed with the light
Above earth's night,
A symphony.
We sweep along in song that never dies.

Sing joyfully!
Bright nature lives
In us.
Thought, sight, and sound,
Mind—all are one.
To gentle souls
We whisper thought echoes of loves profound.

Sing joyfully!
Life's sympathies
Speak truth.
Doubts but disease.
Resurrection is affection,
Spirit wakening,
From earth's tides to voyage o'er brighter seas.

Sing joyfully!
A real world we see.
Earth's meadows and its hills
Within thy heart
Their joys impart
To us as well as thee.
Sing joyfully!
God all space fills.

Or this, called "Address of the Clouds to the Earth":

Owned by Mrs. J. Scott Hartley

OLD APPLE TREES
(A water color)

We have wept our burden; we have filled thy streams.
Thy fields are vital with the greenness of a freshened life, O
Earth, our brother.
And now we court the winds, hilarious in our wedded joy.
O'er thy high-reaching hills we break in varied forms,
And make thy groves and meadows ring in joyous laugh
At our black shadows as we pass.
Soon will we join ourselves in softened forms,
And, far extended on thy horizon, lie stretched along in
sweep repose,
As pearly pendants to thy distant mountain-peaks,
Thy hills revealed, and all thy body bathed in shining light,
We throw our kisses at thee as a vap'rous breath.

While in the spirit of introspection or dramatic intensity one could imagine the storm-clouds gathering on his canvas, creatures of his very depth of thought and dynamic action. "As a man thinks, so is he," can be truly spoken of George Inness. Many times he said to me:

"George, my love for art is killing me, and yet it is what keeps me alive. It is my blessing and my curse."

In this poem, which is called "Destiny," one feels the deep searching of his soul:

O Being, wilt thou tell me what I am to thee and thou to
me?
When all Nature bows beneath the load of world-enforced
cares
My spirit weeps within the close circumference of a with-

ered heart; and then necessity, a giant form, intrudes upon my sight.

Me, with his iron pressure baring, as in prison bound, from all those joys which made this now so creeping time pass with the rapid stride with which the bounding blood of youth doth ever travel. While with a chill monotony his clammy breath falls on my ear in tones that shrivel all my thoughts to one fell word, which echoes through the empty chambers of my soul, nor leaves a cranny where my consciousness can hide itself from the dread sound of destiny.

Elect not whither thou shalt go, for thou art bound, forever prison bound, by me. I—I am destiny! And yet my quickened conscience tells me I am free.

Child of my love, son of that womb which is my other self, speak not against decree; for law is thy necessity, and as decree goes forth, so tireless mind builds it a home. That home is thee. Thou art thine own decree, yet see it not, for youth is blind to what is ever near us, thou the present heat or cold of life. And such is thy decree.

My footsteps sound along the shores of time, the measure of thy love. The note is low, nor is it in the power of sound to form a sweeter harmony than that which makes my step decree time's law to every occupant of nature's wide domain.

I am thy destiny, and I destine thee to be thine own decree. Yet never wilt thou touch the note that love decrees to thee till in thine own decree and, as with me, so is 't with thee. All law is mine, and what is mine my love bestows, nor can withhold itself from being what it is to thee.

My law is thy necessity, yet what I give to thee is thine to use as best shall see thee fit. Necessity is not the giant of thy fears, but law compelling all, create to meet thy heart's desires.

I am thy life. To live is first necessity, and life I give. There is no absolute to thee but me. My movement is creation, and creation is that other self where I have formed my womb. There do I cease to be myself, and give to thee the touch that sets thee free, and brings thee to the knowledge of a world which I inhabit not, but where I do provide such imageries as shall convince thy being. Consciousness of the first truth which I create, reality—there I am nearer to thee than thyself, hidden within the consciousness of being, in what I am—life.

I cause all things to appear to thee. I move in thee. To touch, to know that law arrests desire, here to create in thee, nor does allow its energy to waste itself from thee, but so returns it all that in the consciousness of me thou 'rt conscious of thyself, thou 'rt free.

Did I who called thee into life impose the unit of my person on thy every sense? No image, then, could meet thy gaze, no sense of touch be thine. Thou 'dst cease to choose to be. But through the varied forms which I create by my infinity I offer thee the power of choice, and so from it, through nature, can redeem thy mortal thought to learn those truths within the bounds of which my all-creating will may lead thy spirit upward in eternal flight through worlds unknown to earthly eye or touch.

There where I rest in thee, as consciousness in all, I the substance of the world create, do thou gaze, and so excite desire, that thou of thine own life's necessity may 'st choose; for from the point where I conjoin in you of my full heart I give the will to thine own choice, which filled, my spirit moves to thine own joy, there to be free. Thus will is free, for unto every living thing my love goes forth, that they may take as theirs what yet is mine. This dual power of which I am the sole and only being I represent to thee, in that thou

art the counterpart of yet another self with whom in union thou may 'st ever grow and never full the point attain where you are perfect one. So do I in all nature image forth myself that there may form a law which, as men multiply, shall serve to guide these yet unborn to endless time to that eternal destiny which love in them shall form. As unto life is she thine own desire counterpart, so is thyself to me. From thy desire is formed the image of thy choice, where housed in form as plays your nature love, quick memory builds the image of thy nature's self, the female of thy will. To worship here is then to love, and in the fond embrace, where light should dwell, and understanding form an Eden for the soul, thou givest life to fiery form, create of thought alone, who bind thee with a triple chain of fancied ills, and turn the Eden where I destined thee into a hell of fear, where trembling terrors mock my words of love and turn thy life to hate. The serpent tongue of lust beguiles with logic form thy selfhood's self to meet thee with the fruit of fate, to eat of which is death.

Thus is thy nature formed to be the subject of a choice in which no whit of evil is but good to grow in thee in varied forms when thou dost look to me and know that I am life, not thee. I to provide, I to fulfil what through thy conscious being thou shalt feel is thine, yet know is mine. Then shall my law as truth thine understanding fill with light, and in its glow my will in thee with bow and spear, the serpent of deceit shalt drive from out the precincts of the mind and every minion thought that fouls the aim of life thy lightening will, with loud resonant sound, shall clear away, and give me thee and paradise.

Throughout his whole life he was as plastic as clay in my mother's hands. He loved her with an over-

whelming love, and had she been less wise in her gentle guidance, the world might never have known George Inness. Throughout their struggles and trials she was his counselor, watching him and guarding him with the tenderest love. He depended on her for everything, from the arranging of his necktie to the solving of his deep metaphysical problems. He was perfect in her eyes, and their life was beautiful. I have never seen anything more beautiful. Often right up to the close of their lives I have seen them go off hand in hand like two lovers. He talked to her of his theories and ideals, which were often very involved, and whether she understood all of them or not, she made him feel that she did. The depth of his emotions is sounded in the following poem:

A spirit came to me last night and said:
"I 've seen the working of thy mind in thought.
As flowering trees within our worlds, they give out odor,
And when breezes from our Lord among
Their branches move their leaves to gentle rustling
They give out with its smell soft,
Zephyr sounds that yet are never sad,
But rise into a clearer tone at times
Like summer music.

"There is again a gloaming light
Which creeps along what seems the
Understructure of our home,
When questions agitate they mind and all

Thy brain is laboring with the hard and fearful
Logic of creation's mystery.
We see the laborer in the morning dawn
Delving with necessary toil the charitable globe.
And from the fullness of our souls let tear-drops fall,
Quickening the dews of love in tender sympathy at the masculine endeavor.
But yet we love the music most."

The spirit turned, and then revealed the features of an early day
When arm in arm we blessed the rising sun and cheered ourselves in one another's love as day declined.
One golden sunset found myself alone.
Since then she said the chord that bound us one, to outward eye unseen, has only finer spun,
And now within thy brain I see the heart
I loved in its reality.
Nor age to pale the fire, nor poverty, nor any ill
That earth can show to force itself between what thou art to me
And I to thee.
How good is God, and now with all these years of snow I, too, can say,
How good is God!

I deem it not inappropriate to quote here from the Boston "Transcript," which interprets George Inness not as a master technician, but as a genius who has caught that deep spiritual significance of art which poured itself out freely, upon his canvases, and welded his art and religion into one grand passion.

George Inness's landscapes are the best painted in our time and country, in many instances the best painted in any time or country, because of the qualities of temperament with which the artist is endowed; and as it is these qualities of temperament revealed in the work which mark the productions of all great artists, and set them apart from the commonplace, the mediocre and the merely clever, it is proper to inquire, with a view of obtaining so much of an insight as may be possible into the make-up of what we call genius. What were these innate qualities, the sources whence sprung so much that was new and fine and powerful and grand? Undoubtedly such an inquiry involves something of a study, not only of Inness's own characteristics as an artist, but also of the universal attributes of the artistic temperament. The great human reservoirs from which the world draws its masterpieces of art as thoughtlessly as it draws a cup of water from a faucet are fed by many subterranean springs, springs which flow spontaneously, freely, irresistibly, always giving, joyous to be giving, without price but not without terrible cost to the giver. These springs are the vital elements of the human heart and brain, transmuted into material forms and hues of imperishable beauty by the miracle of creative passion. The mainspring of a great art is the master passion of love, the power of exaltation, the susceptibility to a great and uplifting emotion, a devine flight of the soul. To be a landscape painter of the George Inness stamp means the possession of a sensitiveness almost morbid, of a power of vision extra natural, of a susceptibility to certain phases of earths beauty so keen as to nearly elevate that beauty to a celestial plane; it means that seeing is a pleasure so rapturous that it borders upon pain; it means to be possessed by a ruling passion that leaves no room for any other interest, pursuit or theme under the sun; it means that sick-

ness, affliction, poverty, hardships, reverses, disappointments are as nothing weighed in the balance against art; it means the daily pageant of sunrise, of high noon, of sunset, of evening, glorious beyond all description, filling the heart, filling the cup of life to overflowing, leaving only one supreme desire, to paint it all as it is, to paint it and then die.

Of necessity my mother became the manager and banker of the family. It was impossible for father to keep money. There were numerous impecunious artists around New York who, when they heard that Pop had sold a picture, would come to him with tales of destitution and poverty, with disastrous results to Pop; so it was finally decided to have all checks made directly payable to my mother, who held the purse-strings thereafter.

This letter, written from Scranton, Pennsylvania, serves to show his dependence upon her:

Scranton, Sept., 1855

My dearest wife:

Above all things in the world I would love to see you. I have to think of you the more that I am in trouble. I left my baggage at St. John's and walked to Stroudsburg. The scamp never sent it. I left for Scranton with the promise from the stage proprietor that it should be sent to me the next day. It has not come, and I shall now be at expense to get it. I had to buy a shirt and other things, so that my money is almost gone. Send me ten dollars. I fear I shall need it. You will have to wait until I can send you money or until I return. There is no other way.

THE GREEN HILLSIDE

I kiss you a thousand times, my Love, and will hasten to you as soon as possible. Kiss my little ones for me. I will write you a long letter soon.

Your affectionate husband,

George Inness.

This trip to Scranton was made in the pot-boiling days of his career, and was for the purpose of making a painting of the first roundhouse on the D. L. & W. Railroad, which was to be used for advertising.

There was in reality only one track at the time running into the roundhouse, but the president of the road insisted on having four or five painted in, easing his conscience by explaining that the road would eventually have them.

Pop protested, but the president was adamant, and there was a family to support, so the tracks were painted in.

In the busy years which followed, the picture was virtually forgotten until thirty years or more afterward, when my mother and father were in the City of Mexico, they discovered the old canvas in a junk-shop. The shopkeeper knew nothing of its origin or who painted it, and explained that he had bought it with a job lot of office furnishings, and would be glad to sell it cheap. So my father purchased it for old time's sake. As he walked out of the shop he said, "Do you remember, Lizzie, how mad I was because they made me paint the name on the engine?"

George Inness was generous to a fault, and no man in the world was more easily imposed upon.

At the time he had a studio in the old Dodworth Hall, New York, there was a man who frequented the studios and made his living by his wits, turning his hand to anything that would bring him a penny, honest or otherwise, usually otherwise. Sometimes he preached, sometimes he traveled from town to town lecturing on the care of the teeth, hair, and feet, and selling his credulous listeners ground-up brick-dust, bits of soap or lard, for their particular ailment; and again he sold bits of scented cork supposed to possess the peculiar property of inducing sleep, which he said he had gathered in the Holy Land, but in reality in an old bottle-works in New Jersey. In his leisure moments he visited the artists to talk of art and to smoke their tobacco. One day he rushed into my father's studio, his face the picture of despair. Throwing himself into a chair he cried: "O my God! my wife, my poor dear wife, the mother of my little children! God help them! I cannot. O George, what shall I do? I fear I will kill myself." And he buried his face in his hands and sobbed like a child. Father, wild with anguish, sprang up and grasped him by the shoulders.

"What is it?" he cried. "Your wife you said—tell me, is she—is she—dead?"

"No, George, not dead, not yet, but she soon will be, I 'm afraid. I left her with two doctors, and I have no money to pay for either medicine or food. O God, what shall I do! Where can I find a friend in this hour of need!"

Father felt in his pockets and found nothing.

"I have no money," he cried; "but wait, old man, be calm, wait here." With tears streaming down his face he dashed out of the studio and to the art rooms of John Snedecor, on Broadway. "John," he cried frantically, "I must have money; give me money, quick! It is a case of life and death. I must have it now, not a minute to lose. I 'll pay you back; have n't time to explain." Snedecor thrust twenty dollars into his hand, and he rushed back to the studio. "Here, man," he shouted, "take this, and God be with you. Hurry, for God's sake!"

When he had left, Pop collapsed. He was completely unnerved with the agony of seeing one go through that thing which he most dreaded in his own life. He was so weakened by the experience that he went home, and was not able to leave his bed for two days. On the third day, when he returned to the studio, spent and worn, his friend came in whistling, and Pop grasped him by the hand.

"Your wife?" he asked. "Tell me, how is she?"

"Oh," he replied nonchalantly, "she 's all right, I left her at the wash-tubs."

"But the other day she was ill, man, dying—"

"Oh, pshaw!" he replied, "that was because I wanted twenty dollars. Never mind, old man; I 'll pay it back some day."

But he did n't pay it back, nor did he ever come into the studio again.

by Mr. Ralph Cudney

TWILIGHT AFTER THE SHOWER

CHAPTER VIII

NEW YORK II

FOR a while during the New York period my father and I had a studio together in the old Booth Theater at Broadway and Sixth Avenue. Pop was growing richer and broader in expression with his maturer years and accumulated knowledge.

When he painted he painted at white heat. Passionate, dynamic in his force, I have seen him sometimes like a madman, stripped to the waist, perspiration rolling like a mill-race from his face, with some tremendous idea struggling for expression. After a picture was complete it lost all value for him. He had no more interest in it. What was his masterpiece one day would be "dish-water" and "twaddle" the next. He would take a canvas before the paint was really dry, and, being seized with another inspiration, would paint over it. I have known him to paint as many as half a dozen or more pictures on one canvas, in fact, as many as the canvas would hold. One day he called my mother and me into the studio and showed us a picture that he had just completed.

"There, Lizzie," he said, "I 've at last done the thing that I have been trying for all my life. I 've done it this time. I 've got it at last. Ah, that 's it, and it 's so easy. See the effect? I can do it every time now. It 's just the easiest thing in the world. Can do it just as easy as eat. Well, Georgie, what do you think of it?"

"Why, Pop," I said, "it 's beautiful. You have got it; your color and light could n't be improved upon. It 's beautiful. It 's a masterpiece."

Several days after that I came into the studio and found father pacing up and down the floor in a nervous, excitable sort of way, saying:

"There, I have got it this time. Thought I had it before. Light and color were n't right; but I 've got it this time all right. Just the thing I want."

I went over to the easel and looked at the canvas. My heart sank. It was ruined! I did n't say a word. I could n't. I wanted to cry. The beautiful composition of the week before had been entirely painted over. For a while neither of us spoke; then my father, who was by that time highly nervous, growled out:

"Well?" I did n't answer. "Well?" he snapped. "What have you got to say about it?"

"Oh, nothing, Pop. Only what did you do it for?"

"Now, there you go!" he snapped, and began to stamp up and down the floor. "What do you know about it, anyhow?" He slammed the palette down on the table. "Can't you see I 've improved it? Can't you see what I 've done? Look how much better it is now. Why, before it was dish-water, pea-soup. It had no character. Now it means something. What did I send you over to Paris to study for? Come here telling me what to do! You don't know anything about it. Get out of here! Get out! I don't want you around."

Hurt and disappointed, I left the studio and walked aimlessly about the streets. That evening at the dinner-table in our boarding-house down on Washington Square father and I were both very glum. Mother looked from one to the other, but no word of explanation was offered. Pop looked like a thunder-cloud and did n't eat much. My dinner did n't taste good. I finished as soon as possible and, not waiting for dessert, excused myself and went to the Salmagundi Club. Our studio was a large one, and to save room rent, I slept on a cot behind a screen. It was late when I got back that night. We had no gas, the only light in the room being that of candles. The entrance to the studio was through a narrow hall which opened on Sixth Avenue. I fumbled my way down the dark hall, opened the studio door, struck a match, and began

to grope my way to the candle. As I walked I tripped over soft things that seemed to cover most of the floor. A frame cracked, and I jumped. The match went out. I struck another, and with difficulty reached the candle. Through its dim, flickering light I could see nothing. I then held it above my head, and saw rags, rags everywhere, strewn over the floor, steeped in dark, ugly stains that looked like blood. I did n't know what terrible thing had occurred; my first thought was that burglars had been there, and I was wondering what I should do, when I caught sight of the picture on the easel. I stared in my astonishment. It was the beautiful picture of the week before in all the spontaneous beauty that mother and I had admired.

I blew out the candles, and crept into bed happy.

The next morning when I went to breakfast I found Pop alone. At my greeting he simply nodded. After breakfast we started for the studio. We always walked arm in arm, but this morning he did n't take my arm. I felt exactly what I knew he felt, and when I could stand it no longer, I thrust my arm in his, and we walked silently on until we had nearly reached the studio, when he said very simply:

"Georgie, I nearly ruined that picture."

"I know it, Pop; but it 's all right now."

"Yes," he said. "I could n't sleep. I got up and

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THE SPRING BLOSSOMS

got a bottle of sweet-oil and a bundle of rags from the landlady, and went to the studio and wiped the whole damned thing off. George, we must have gas put in that studio."

But even that did n't cure him of that fatal habit. Nothing ever did, and it became more and more of a passion with him. Sometimes it was a good thing, but more often a beautiful canvas was ruined. However, on one occasion it proved to be a success. I went into his studio one day when he was on Fifty-fifth Street, and as I entered I saw him standing in front of his easel.

"Hello, Pop," I said. "Thought I would just run over and see what you were about. Got anything new?"

"Yes, I have a canvas here I 've been fussing over. How does it look?"

"Fine, Pop," I answered enthusiastically; "all right, beautiful. Fine tone."

"Yes, it has things in it, but it 's stupid. Confound it! it 's too good; it 's all tone. That 's what 's the matter with it. I 've got too much detail in the foreground. That 's a thing we are always running up against to tickle the buyer—to make a few dollars. Those weeds don't mean anything. Let 's take them out; they are not the picture. This picture is very good, but it 's all tone."

"Yes, Pop, but that 's what I like about it; it 's beautiful in tone."

"Perhaps; but that 's what makes it stupid. Why in thunder can't we put something in that 's out of tone? You see, there 's no interest in this picture. It 's well drawn, yes, well constructed, well painted, and perfectly tonal; but there 's no passion in it. A picture without passion has no meaning, and it would be far better had it never been painted. Imitation is worthless. Photography does it much better than you or I could. In a bar-room in New York is a painting of a barn-door with hinges on it and a keyhole. It is painted so well that you would swear the hinges were real, and you could put your finger in the keyhole; but it is not real! It is not what it represents. It is a lie. Clever, yes, but it gives you no sensation of truth, because before you look at it you are told that it is a lie. The only charm in this picture is in deceiving you into the belief that it is a real barn-door. Now, in art, true art, we are not seeking to deceive. We do not pretend that this is a real tree, a real river; but we use the tree or the river as a means to give you the feeling or impression that under a certain effect is produced upon us." He had forgotten the picture in question for the time being, and had begun to pound away at me with his theories.

"Now let us assume that an artist, through a divine

power, has been endowed with a keen sense to see the beautiful in nature that the ordinary layman who is chained to his desk cannot see. If we can give that man a canvas that will take him away from his desk and lead him into the field and make him feel what we feel when we hear the birds sing and see the grain wave, we have done something good. In our art this is what we should strive for. But unfortunately the poor devil who is chained to his desk generally has no interest in the canvas other than the fact that it may have a greater money value after our death. I tell you, George, if we could only create a public who would appreciate art for art's sake, buy pictures because they love them, and not be led by the nose by the dealer who knows less about art than the most ignorant farmer whose corn-patch you are painting. And why does the picture-dealer know nothing about the art he is selling? Because his judgment is warped by the money he may make. In the dealer's eyes the greatest work of art is the one he can make the most money on. It has been proved hundreds of times. How about Millet, Corot? And I might mention a lot of others whose works were worthless until they were proclaimed great by their brother artists. Take myself, for instance. What has your 'high-class-painting' dealer done for me? Nothing was good without a foreign name on it. Why, when one of our

biggest dealers on Fifth Avenue, was asked to procure for a gentleman two American pictures for one thousand dollars each, he said he could not take the order because there was not a picture produced in America worth one thousand dollars. Why? Because they can go to Europe, buy a picture for twenty-five or fifty francs, with a foreign name on it, and sell it at a large profit."

"But the dealers are handling your pictures, Pop."

"Yes, I know the dealers are taking up my pictures, but simply because the public wants them. No, George, it 's all wrong, the whole system. There is no art in this country; we have no 'amateur.' If a man is going in for collecting, why does he not make enough of a study of it to be able to buy what he likes? In all my acquaintances of art buyers I do not know three who would dare buy a picture before he saw the name of the painter in the corner. Many a picture I have sold for fifty dollars. I wonder if it will be worth more after my death. If it is, I am quite sure it will not be a better work of art just because I am dead."

It is interesting to note here that many of these pictures for which he received so small a sum are now bringing in the Fifth Avenue shops ten, fifteen, and twenty thousand dollars each.

"Oh, well," he continued, "forget it. Maybe I have

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

AUTUMN MORNING

said too much. The dealer has his place, and perhaps we poor devils would starve to death without him; but when I see a dealer shed tears over a canvas that he expects to make five hundred per cent. on, I—well, let 's get back to the picture."

Nothing warmed him up to a pitch of inspiration quite so much as to expound his theories. His eyes were beginning to flash; he was becoming tense, and as he turned, with a swift, intense movement toward the easel, I knew that that exquisite tonal picture was doomed. He seized his palette, squeezed out a great quantity of ivory black, and pounced on the canvas with the alertness of a lion. He dashed at the tree in the corner with a glaze of black, which he carried through the foreground.

"There you see, George, the value of the gray color underneath glazing. The transparency of it comes out in tone. The shadows are full of color. Not pigment; all light and air. Wipe out a little more of it. Never was anything as nice as transparent color." He sprang back several paces, held his hand over his eyes, and looked at the canvas through half-closed lids.

"Confound it, George! It 's got too much tone! We don't know just what it 's going to be, but it 's coming. We don't care what it is so it expresses beauty." With a wild rush he swiftly painted out two

of the sheep in the foreground. "Too much detail, I tell you." His hair was disheveled, his eyes burned with the fire of creative intensity, and the tail of his shirt, responding to the emotional stress of its owner, had been jerked from its usual abiding-place. "Now," he continued, waving his palette in the air, "we are getting some kind of effect. Don't know what the deuce it 's going to be, but we are getting a start. Now we will suggest that tree in the middle distance with a little yellow." He stood off again, held his palette up to his eyes, and with another dash obliterated the tops of the trees with a dash of blue sky. The atmosphere was electrified. Pop was quivering with emotion, and I, too, caught the tenseness of the situation. He dabbed and smeared, and for a quarter of an hour the silence was broken only by his quick breathing and the jabs of his brush on the canvas. He was bringing a composition out of chaos.

"That old gnarled tree might make something; we 'll use that. Take advantage of anything you can on your canvas, George. Confound it! now your mother will give me the devil for using my shirt as a paint-rag. I think that 's asking too much. Can't have any peace. She won't let me do what I want. Now we 'll put a dab of dark here and light over there. Just like music, George—the harmony of tone. We thump, thump, thump the keys to the distance, but

don't forget to put in the harsh note, the accidental. It makes the contrast that gives interest and beauty to the whole, the gradation of light and shade which corresponds to music. What is art, anyway? Nothing but temperament, expression of your feelings. Some days you feel one way, some days another; all temperament. There, you see it's opening up. Tickle the eye, George, tickle the ear. Art is like music. Music sounds good to the ear, makes your feet go—want to dance. Art is art; paint, mud, music, words, anything. Art takes hold of you—sentiment, life, expression. Take the poet. He does the same thing we are trying to do. Poe in 'The Bells,' for instance,—all the same thing,—it rolls, tolls, swells, dwells—all poetry, all the same thing. He uses words; we use paint; the other fellow uses a fiddle. You can't go any further than that. Oh, to paint a picture, a sunset, without paint! To create without paint! I'll tell you, George, if a man paints one picture in a lifetime that's good, he should be satisfied. When I've painted one picture that's a true expression, I'll be ready to go." Under the volley of words and strokes the composition was rapidly taking form.

"Never paint with the idea of selling. Lose everything first, George. You can put in a little dog, maybe, and it will buy you an overcoat. Be honest;

somebody 's going to find it out. You 'll get the credit for it in the long run. Gad! the struggles I 've had in my life to be true! Dealers come in and offer me money to put in this or that, and I have to do it because I have to live. There, see it grow—only a tone; but it makes you feel good." With a few deft touches he had suggested several sheep in the foreground. The whole picture was dark and tonal. But the dull-red house of the original composition still stood out incongruously in the new. He stepped back several paces and looked at it; then with a dash he slapped in a mass of yellow ocher over the house, and with two or three sweeps of the brush had transformed the old red structure into a vibrant twilight sky. All the rest was dark and in perfect tone. With that supreme stroke he struck the accidental, and pushed the harmony almost to discord, and the finished canvas stood before us a masterpiece.

While I am speaking of my father's ideals and theories, specially when they touch on what he called the trickery in art, I am constrained to tell the story of a lady whose favorite pastime in New York was hunting lions. This lady was very rich, and had constituted herself one of my father's patrons just at the time when he most needed patrons.

One day when she was in the studio she became very enthusiastic over a canvas he was painting. She

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DAWN

watched him for some time, then burst out that she wanted to make a suggestion, but was too frightened.

"Go right on, Madam," said my father. "What is it you would like to suggest?"

"Oh, I am afraid to say it, but—but—don't you think—oh, Mr. Inness, I 'm so afraid, but don't you think that if you had a man coming down the lane it would give interest?"

Father looked up.

"Why, I believe it would. You are right. That 's just what the picture wants. It needs a spot of light there. I 'm glad you mentioned it. I felt there was something lacking. There, that 's it." The dear lady was all in a flutter as she saw him with consummate skill put the figure in. The artist, her latest lion, had taken her suggestion and had acted upon it.

"Oh, mercy!" she continued, "dare I do it again? Now, oh, Mr. Inness, don't you think you might—oh, dear, can't you put a little dog following the man?"

Exasperated beyond control, he burst out:

"Madam, you are a fool!"

The lady never visited my father's studio again. The lion had snapped at her. She never bought another Inness and, I am told, sold all that she had.

The tremendous desire to paint over a canvas did not limit itself to his own pictures. He was no respecter of persons or pictures, and it made no differ-

ence who painted the original, who was the owner, or what was sacrificed in the doing. Many of his contemporaries have fallen victims to this insatiate weakness. I believe he would far rather have painted on a picture than a clean canvas. The composition, no matter how good, always suggested something that he could improve upon. It became so bad that Mrs. A. H. Wyant, wife of the artist, finally had to forbid him her husband's studio.

I remember on one occasion the artist J. G. Brown told me of my father coming into his studio in the Tenth Street Building, which is still one of New York's prominent studios, and after looking at a nice little bootblack who was making his black and tan dog beg for a piece of cake said:

"That 's a good story, Brown, but your boy 's too clean, and your dog 's too black and tan. You 've got too much in the picture; in fact, it 's all cracker-box and dog and boy. What you want is breadth. Take out some of those details and tell the story more simply. Here, give me your brush; I 'll show you."

"And," said Brown, "I wish you could have seen the way he went at that ten-by-fourteen canvas. With one sweep of the brush he had changed my beautiful brick wall into a twilight sky, had made a pool of water out of the cracker-box, wiped all the buttons off the boy's clothes, and changed boy and dog into a

couple of dull-colored tramps. But I have that canvas yet, and nothing would induce me to part with it."

Such things happened often to me. About forty years ago I painted a picture of a team of oxen—a picture of which my father was as proud as I. In fact, he thought so much of it that he bought a handsome gold frame, and had it exhibited in the art rooms of Williams & Everett in Boston. Then the picture disappeared, and I wondered many times what had happened to it. I was sure that I had never sold it, and I had almost deluded myself into the belief and hope that some art lover had yielded to a great temptation and stolen it. But "what a check to proud ambition!" One day recently, while visiting my sister, Mrs. Hartley, I was looking at a very wonderful canvas of my father's that is hanging in her house, a powerful storm effect, and catching it in a cross light, I saw under the clouds and landscape the outline of my team of oxen. The mystery was solved. My oxen had come to light, or, rather, I should say, had been revealed in darkness. All these years they had been plodding through this glorious storm. Dear old Pop, in dire need of a canvas, had painted over my picture and immortalized it thus.

Again, when I had a studio at 896 Broadway, Pop came in, and looking at a twenty-by-thirty canvas, which I called "The Lost Sheep," praised it exces-

sively. This story seems almost incredible, but is true, nevertheless. The subject was a large sheep that took up the greater part of the canvas,—I should say about sixteen inches,—and by her side trudged a poor little lamb. They were lost in a snow-storm. The canvas was dry, having been set aside as finished. I was going to try to trade it off for a suit of clothes or something when Pop saw it.

"'The Lost Sheep,'" he said, "why when did you do that? It's fine. Tells the story well, is well painted, and thoroughly carried out. You are on the right track; keep right on in that way. It is the first really complete picture you have painted, and it does not suggest me. You will find after this that your work will go much easier. Your trouble has been that you work too long on a picture; you must let it alone when you have finished it and not fuss over it. A very fine canvas, George,"—and in a very low voice, each word pronounced slowly and distinctly,—"possibly a little too much detail in the foreground." He shaded his eyes with his hand, just as I had remembered him many years before while painting the wash-tub, then he began to get excited, and with a sweep of his arm said: "Don't you see your foreground is all full of weeds? They've got nothing to do with the story. Why the devil can't you get more breadth in your pictures?"

"But, Pop—"

"Nonsense, I tell you! It 's got no breadth; it 's full of things. Wipe them out if you are going to paint snow." Jumping up from his seat, he shouted: "Why in thunder don't you make it snow? Give it breadth." He stalked up and down the studio, waving his arms around his head. "What is it? If you want to make a picture of it, take out that sheep. It 's a snow scene you are painting; then give a feeling of snow. Take out that sheep; it has no value."

"But, Pop—" I protested.

"I tell you"—shaking his fist and rushing up to the canvas—"it 's as much like a sheep as a stone wall. Here, give me your brushes; I 'll show you." I handed over palette and brushes. He squeezed out a quantity of white paint, and went at it as if he were plastering a wall. He did n't paint out the sheep; he simply enveloped it. His hair was tumbled, his face flushed, and he worked like something possessed. When he was through, he flung down the palette, sank into a chair, and said, "There! Now you 've got some breadth to your picture!"

We sat and looked at each other for a few moments in silence.

Finally Pop spoke:

"Well, why don't you say something? Don't sit there like a bump on a log. Don't you like it?"

"No," I said; "my picture is ruined."

"Then," he exclaimed impatiently, "why the devil did you do it, George? Wipe it off!"

This I did.

"There now," he said, "you 've got your picture back. Never do such a thing again, George. I do it, too, and it 's the curse of my life. You 've got a good picture there, and for Heaven's sake leave it alone now!"

"The Lost Sheep" was found, and we walked arm in arm out of the studio to dinner.

My father had the idea firmly established in his mind that a work of art from his brush always remained his property, and that he had the right to paint it over or change it at will, no matter where he found it or who had bought it, or what money he may have received for it. Wherever he found his pictures after they had left his studio he criticized, and would in most violent language declare the thing was "rot," that the sky was false or the distance out of key, and in a very matter of fact way would say "Just send it around to the studio to-morrow and I 'll put it into shape."

"But I like it as it is," the purchaser would reply.

"It makes no difference what you like; I say the thing is false. Here, let me take it with me, and I

will make a picture of it. I see a fine idea in it, and I will have it done to-morrow."

In response to the owner's entirely legitimate objections he would continue:

"Nonsense! What right have you to like it when I find it false and discordant? Don't you think I know what I am talking about? And I want you to understand, sir, that I claim the right to go into any house and change a work of mine when I am not satisfied with it, and see where I can improve it. Do you think, because you have paid money for a picture of mine, that it belongs to *you?* If you had any knowledge of art, you would see that it is false and be glad to have me work upon it and improve it."

He was perfectly sincere in such convictions and honestly tried to carry them out.

A gentleman once bought from my father a large and important canvas. He was very proud of possessing it, and asked Inness to send it to the exhibition of the Academy of Design, which was to be held the next week, explaining that it would give him much pleasure to show his friends the picture he had bought, and to have it hung in the academy rooms. My father agreed readily, as he believed this particular picture to be the finest thing he had ever done. The last was always the best, the old story of the new baby.

So he assured his patron that the canvas would be sent.

The next day Inness looked at the canvas.

"This has been sold," he thought; "it is finished and going to be taken away. I wonder if I can improve it. The foreground wants some lifting up; it lacks interest. These rocks are too small, and the sea that is beating against them looks hard, it has no motion."

On the impulse of the moment he seized his palette and dashed at the canvas. The quiet waves were turned into a raging sea of foam, the sky was darkened to lower the tone, and over the whole picture an angry thunder-storm was cast. He stood off from the easel and looked at it.

"Confound the thing! I 've ruined it. The sea is mud, and the sky has turned to lead. I cannot rub it off because the paint underneath is wet. It 's getting dark, and I must catch the train. Curse the luck! I 'll never do such a thing again. When I get a picture finished, and any damn fool wants to buy it, I will leave it alone whether I like it or not."

When Pop reached home that evening it was quite evident to mother that something had gone wrong with his work. She always knew, and although he was very glum and wanted to be let alone, she, with an art of her own, drew the whole story out bit by bit, and when he had finished she sent him to bed con-

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

SUMMER SILENCE

vinced by her wise arguments that he had improved the picture, and with a few deft strokes could bring it back to perfection in the morning.

The next day, upon reaching the studio, he was still of the opinion that it had been for the best that he had blotted out "that stupid sea picture," giving him a real opportunity to make a beautiful thing. The big rock he changed into an apple-tree. With the aid of a palette-knife he scraped off the raging sea, and in its place painted in a rich grass meadow. In the middle distance he placed a clump of elm-trees in shadow. He was happy once again, and as he sang and whistled the picture grew. Here was a new problem to solve, a new idea to bring into being, to create.

The postman dropped a letter in the slot, but Inness was in no mood for letters. He scarcely noticed it. When under the fire of inspiration he heard nothing, saw nothing, cared for nothing but the thing which he was creating. The picture was growing at his touch. A big bright cloud rolled up behind the elms, a heavy pall hung down from the zenith of the sky, and here and there little clouds floated in a soft, gray sky, and down upon the horizon settled a veil of deeper blue, throwing in relief a sunlit barn. Far beyond a puff of smoke rose from a rushing train. The darkened pall of cloud cast a shadow on the

ground in front, leaving the rest bathed in amber light.

Exhausted, but happy, Pop filled his pipe, picked up the letter from the floor, and dropping into a chair opened the letter, which inclosed a check for the picture on the easel before him, the one he had just completed.

"The gentleman will be pleased," he said aloud. "The subject is nothing. It is the art he wants, and this is the greatest thing I have ever done."

The following week the academy exhibition opened, and according to my father's promise the picture was hung. The gentleman who had purchased it was there on the first day, eager to show the great masterpiece to his friends. He searched the galleries through, and great was his chagrin at not finding it; but when he caught sight of the new Inness he exclaimed to his friends that this one was finer than the one he had bought, and expressed his regret at not having seen it first. A crowd had gathered around the canvas, artists and laymen, and were looking with unconcealed admiration at the work of the master when my father and I entered. Catching sight of Inness, his patron rushed up to him and exclaimed:

"Mr. Inness, how could you disappoint me so? You promised to send my picture here, and you have sent this one."

"Why, this is your picture," said Pop, "a little changed, perhaps; but then, you see, I had not finished it."

CHAPTER IX

LETTERS

GEORGE INNESS is known primarily as a landscape-painter, and as such he won his reputation; but it is interesting to note that even after he had established himself as a painter of landscapes he became very enthusiastic about figure-painting, and decided to go into that almost to the exclusion of the broader subject. These letters to my mother tell the story better than I can.

SUNDAY, MILTON, July, 1881

My darling wife:

I was glad to get your two letters, as I had wondered why I had not heard from you more frequently. I begin to feel lonely without you, but there is no help for it. What I determine upon I must hereafter carry out resolutely or I shall accomplish nothing. I will no longer have any unfinished work in my wake to bother me.

My picture still needs about three days, I think, but if I can improve it after that I shall not hesitate to use the time. I think you will be somewhat surprised when you see it. The old man seems to strike people as wonderful. The boy's face also is considered very fine, although he is not yet finished, particularly the figure and hands, which have a great deal to do with the faces. The old man's eyes, just peering

out from under the rim of his hat against a glowing twilight sky, have a most weird and striking effect. The hands are very thorough and strong in character, and the whole picture is exceedingly mellow and rich with the light of the afterglow.

You have no idea how stunningly I am painting every part of it. Every part speaks of reality. I begin to feel now that I have got at what will always be in demand at good prices, and I feel my interest in this sort of thing gradually taking the place of landscape. They are certainly more satisfactory, although at present I have to apply myself very closely.

My next I shall no doubt do with much greater ease and certainty. We have had one or two rather warm days this week, but it is cool enough now; in fact, on the piazza it is almost cold. I hope, darling, that you are enjoying yourself and having a good time. I thought at one time that I might find some subjects at Alexandria Bay, but if I did, it would be difficult to get models and opportunities which I get here. Here I have everything just as I want and need at present, just such subjects as suit me, and every convenience of time.

The old man and his children, together with some little girls who are running about, make capital models, and I must not neglect this opportunity if I intend to paint these subjects. If I do not do it now I shall never do it, and if I can get these pictures in the style of the one I am painting finished this summer, I shall feel pretty sure of being able to get myself into smooth waters.

All the friends here send their kind regards and good wishes, and some of them will await your return with impatience as time lessens the distance between us.

I am never in a very good condition to write, as my work

is pretty constant and uses up my powers pretty well, although otherwise I thrive under the work. To-day I got interested in a book, and have been reading all day, which rather upsets me for writing very brilliant letters. Give my love to all,

Your affectionate GEORGE.

MILTON, July 6, 1881

My darling wife:

I received your very dear letter this evening, and with it the others from Mr. Smith, which did not, of course, make me feel very brilliant; so I went to work with some charcoal and made some sketches until I got myself in a more comfortable condition. I did not feel very much disturbed, however, as I always thought the sending pictures to London was nonsense. I thought that the small one might do something at a moderate price, but the works of an unknown artist are not worth anything until some known dealer works them up. Still, as they are there, perhaps Mr. Smith may find a dealer with whom he may make a bargain; but if he does, it will be for very little.

It is going to be a scorcher to-day. It is now half-past six, and the thermometer is at seventy-eight; so that we may expect to be among the big figures about noon. I am in excellent spirits, however, and only fear that my old man may find it too hot to stand for me. I got my canvas stretched and the figures drawn in charcoal from the sketch yesterday afternoon, but the old man did not feel very well, so I sketched in the background with some minor matters, and left the canvas, etc., at his house for this morning, when he promised to stand.

As I write I feel a breeze spring up from southwest, so that it may turn out cooler. I am much stronger in many ways than you think. It is not so much the body as it is

the discouraging anxieties which I have had to endure, and which come over me at every landscape that I complete. It seems to say, what use am I? It is therefore desirable that I get myself firmly fixed in this painting of figure and overcome the tendency to an old sympathy.

If I had gone with you to Alexandria Bay the fresh scenery there would have at once put me off the track, and I consider it a good thing that this figure picture had got full possession of my mind. I begin to feel the increasing interest in them, and I find that the landscape which I introduce has a charm greater than when painted alone. There is a calf fastened to the side of the lane of which I can make great use in something; in fact, I begin to see how the interest of figure and landscape are to be combined better and better every day, and how the charm of the latter can be vastly increased thereby.

MILTON, SUNDAY, July, 1881

My darling wife:

It would be very pleasant for me to be with you to-day, but distance and expense stand between us as too great for a short visit; for I could not leave what I am doing permanently, and I am sure you would not desire it at the expense of neglecting my work.

The weather is at times pretty warm, but on the whole I get on very well, working easily and successfully. I have now had four days upon my figure picture, and it is very satisfactory. I am convinced now that I can paint these things without any lack of character or accuracy. Mr. Gurney says he would choose it sooner as it is than any of my landscapes, and as long as I can get a model, I can get on as easily with one as with another. You may feel assured that two or three such pictures as this is getting to be will

get us out of trouble. If I do not sell a landscape, I feel that I am getting stunning characters, and I see several things to do which will be as good. I think it probable that I shall get through this week, but am not certain; in any case I do not think it advisable to leave a field where I am doing such successful work and enjoying good health at the same time. If I had money, I might feel differently; but if I do not hear something favorable from the pictures I sent to New York, I must go there and try to stir up something. It will never do for me to wait until I am almost out of money. It seems to me that until affairs are in better shape I must remain nearer my base of supplies.

I am glad to know, my dear, that you are enjoying yourself. Be happy and feel certain that our short separation will end in a great satisfaction to us both in the knowledge that my stay here has been pecuniary profit. I have obtained the box for Nell. It is from Mr. Duly, a very handsome mat of fox-skins, which I presume is for looks rather than use.

It was my intention to write you a good long letter to-day, but I find myself very dull, I presume from having got interested in one of those subjects which absorb the mind to a point of exhaustion; so you must not think I neglect you for my greatest happiness is to be where you are. All the friends here inquire of me as to how you are enjoying yourself, and send much love. Give my love to Nell and Scott, and remember me to all.

Your affectionate husband,

GEORGE INNESS.

MILTON, July 13, 1881

My dear wife:

I do not think it wise for me to leave here at present. My work is going on well, and I am well. So you must not ex-

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

MIDSUMMER

pect me for some time, and it may be that I shall stay here until you come back. I have already written you why I consider it necessary for me to stay. My picture is a great success and progresses rapidly. A few more days will finish it. C—— was here to-day on his way to Palenville. He seems to think it will create a sensation and will command ready sale. It is certainly a very striking picture, and as soon as it is finished I shall commence another, which I have composed from nature.

I think these things will bring money readily, and I am determined to get out of debt this winter, and the sale of landscapes is too uncertain.

I trust, my dear, that you will enjoy yourself just the same. The weather is rather warm, but nothing distressing. I do not mind it. Give my love to all. Does baby remember grandpa?

Your affectionate
GEORGE.

MILTON, July 19, 1881

My dear wife:

I have just received yours of the 17th inst.

I still have our room, so that if you conclude to come on the first of August we can be accommodated as before. I feel very lonely sometimes without you, although I keep myself so thoroughly employed that I drive away anything like the blues. I hope that you will come, but I do not feel that I shall press you against what you think you should do. All the friends here are anxious that you should return soon. If Nell can get on without you, I do not see why you should stay.

I have commenced the new picture. It is a part of the lane near the old man's house, including him and several figures of children, a dog and so forth. I just write this in

haste as a requested answer to your last. So you must excuse its shortness. I shall write again in a day or two.

Yours affectionately,

GEORGE.

July 22, 1881

My dear wife:

I have been so busy that I have not been able to write to you since Tuesday last, as I intended to. I have just been looking over my picture of the old man, which I have laid aside for a day or two. There is certainly something wonderful in this picture, as several persons have said. It is exceedingly elaborate, but sufficiently broad. I still have about a day's work upon it, which I shall do when I feel perfectly fresh. The picture is a warm, mellow russet-gray, and gives the feeling of the time very strangely, and whoever looks at it once will not get away from it very easily. My second picture progresses very rapidly, and is to be fresh and green, though not violent. I shall soon paint the figure with great power. I commenced another picture to-day, which I had made a small sketch of and have had in my mind for some time. The size is thirty-eight by twenty-four. Subject, "An Evening at the Pond." I have taken just a small bit by the water, with rushes very near and a dark wood on opposite bank against the reflection of this wood. I have a figure of a girl in light grays and white in shadow, and a boy, feet in water, throwing a stone at some large birds which are rising from the rushes. A brilliant evening sky at the right, seen over some lower forms of wood, is reflected in the foreground, and the back of a black cow is seen going out of the picture. This tells the story of the girl and boy without introducing more cattle. The girl is about twelve inches high. The effect is grand, and so is the color; in

fact, the picture seems to me to express grandeur better than anything I have done. All these pictures are painted with very gray colors, which I find give me the truest tone of nature, so that, although they are very rich, they are full of air.

The picture of the lane is very real-looking. How is the little tot? I want to see her very much, as I do all of you, but I must carry out my program. I wonder sometimes at what I go through, but though I sometimes feel pretty well used up, I soon recuperate, and find it best not to give way to the notion of fatigue, as work agrees with me, and a little change of subject rests me better than to do nothing.

Good-by, darling,

Your affectionate husband,

GEORGE.

MILTON, July 22, 1881

My dear wife:

I hardly know what to write to you to-night as I feel rather dull and in no condition to write. It is not that I am not well exactly, but a sort of depression which will not relieve itself in words. I presume it is the natural effect of hard work, and I presume the rest I have had to-day will bring me all right by morning. I am glad to hear that you have determined to return on the first of August. You may depend that I shall be very glad to see you again. I have found some beautiful walks, which we can take together as we did in the old times.

The pictures go on all right. This afternoon it has been rather warm, but nothing to speak of. On the whole, it has been very comfortable, and I do not think we shall have

much warm weather this summer. Excuse this short letter, and give my love to all.

Your affectionate husband,

GEORGE.

Dear wife:

Milton is where you left it, and all things are about the same. Work goes on as usual, and all is serene. My picture interests me more and more as it goes on, particularly now that it begins to have force and gets nearer and nearer to the tone of nature. I shall continue working on it as long as I can improve it, so that precisely when it will be finished I cannot say; however as long as I obtain what I want the time is not to be considered. I presume you are enjoying yourself; that is, if you can keep cool. It is pretty warm here to-day; about ninety, I think.

We expect you to bring lots of news upon your return. All hands seem to miss you, and none more than I. I shall look for you on Saturday. Give my love to Julia and George.

Your affectionate GEORGE.

The picture of the old man referred to in these letters was sold in the executor's sale of Inness pictures in 1895. The picture itself brought only two hundred and eighty dollars, but the entire amount of the whole sale exceeded one hundred thousand dollars.

My father's enthusiasm for figure-painting did not last long, a few years at most, but while it lasted, he did some very noteworthy things, "The Old Veteran," or "The Old Man" being one of the best examples.

THE OLD VETERAN

There is a little story connected with this canvas. It disappeared, as father's pictures had done before, and we supposed it had merely gone the way of many of his best works; that being in need of a canvas, he had painted the old man out. We were resigned to the loss. Some time later the picture was discovered beautifully framed in the home of a gentleman who was one of Pop's patrons. Upon inquiry as to how he got it, the gentleman replied in very positive tones that he had purchased it from George Inness himself.

"Never," said my father. "I did not sell you that picture."

"Well, Mr. Inness," he continued, "do you remember selling me this?" He pointed to a landscape of my father's.

"I do," answered Pop.

"Well, when you sold me that landscape you sold me this old man. When I got it home I found that the canvas on which you had painted the landscape had been stretched over the original canvas of the old veteran; therefore I consider that I own both of these pictures, as I paid you for them when purchasing the landscape. I bought the stretcher, with all that was on it."

"I suppose," said my father, "that if you bought a pair of shoes and found that a five-dollar bill had accidently dropped into one of the shoes while the clerk

was wrapping them up, you would keep the five dollars. Unless you return the old man to me I shall be obliged to take the matter into court."

The picture was returned.

In the summer of 1883 my father painted in Nantucket, where he found much to interest him, judging from the following letters:

SCONSET, Aug. 2, 1883

My dear wife:

We are still having very fine weather, and I find myself in excellent condition. Everything goes on well, and my work is advancing with tolerable rapidity. I have advanced the picture, commenced while you were here, very considerably, and have a very good start on another which promises well. I am obliged to refuse to show my work, as the curiosity of people becomes a nuisance; so I told Nichols that when they are finished he can have them at his house, and put up a notice on the town pump that they are on exhibition.

. . . . . .

I find plenty of employment, so that the time passes easily, and if I improve as I have done the last two days, I have no doubt but that I shall gather considerable strength for the winter. I find new and interesting points continually, and I do not know but that the very grandeur of the scenery forces me to make telling combinations. At least I obtain something new and out of the usual run of subjects. I saw a very fine sunset last evening from Mr. Burbank's house which with figures could be made interesting and striking, and I do not know but that I may send for two larger boards and paint two more extensive scenes which have impressed me. This, however, is to be considered hereafter, as I wish to clean up

pretty well as I go on. Give my love to Nellie and kiss the babies for me. Tell Rosie that I may find something for her when I come back.

Your affectionate husband,

GEORGE.

SCONSET, Aug. 4, 1883

My dear Lizzie:

I have just been out to see the setting of the sun, strolling up the road and studying the solemn tones of the passing daylight. There is something peculiarly impressive in the effects of the far-stretching distance, the weather-worn gray of the buildings, and the general sense of solitariness which quite suits my present mood. I find more and more to interest me, and shall no doubt find my stay here profitable. My first picture is very nearly complete, and has, I think, an exquisite tone without losing the sense of brightness. The second progresses very satisfactorily, and will take but a few days more to finish. The third picture is all arranged and ready for painting in color, which I hope to do quickly as soon as I am ready to commence it.

I have had a great success with another painted out of doors back of Nichols' barn—some sheep coming through a gateway. For that I have used one of the large mill boards, so that although I stroll about and work at intervals only, there has been considerable work done.

I took a walk just before dinner, and was very much taken with the effects of a broad field, with its faded yellow grass, terminating against a blue sky with white clouds sailing along in the clear atmosphere, and if I have time I hope to paint it. If I can only get the sense of vastness with which it impresses me I think a picture of it will be very novel and very telling.

I called upon Mr. Flagg yesterday, who insisted upon my staying to supper. I had a very pleasant time and a bit of bluefish done to perfection. I thought I had never tasted anything so nice. He appears to be *au fait* in this sort of thing, and takes a great deal of pride in having everything for his table done in the best manner. I also called with Nichols upon Miss F—— this afternoon, so you see I am getting to be quite a society man. I should not object, however, to the ladies having a little more beauty, for a homelier set of women than have taken possession of Sconset I think I never saw together in one place. I am afraid, my dear, that you have spoiled me. I always think—well, I wish I could see my Lizzie. But so much of the brown earth and blue water separate us now that my only satisfaction must be in asking you to kiss yourself for me.

Your loving GEORGE.

The following summer these letters came from Virginia, where he made some very excellent paintings.

GOOCHLAND COURTHOUSE, VA.,
Sunday, April, 1884

My dear wife:

I have read your two letters, and you may be sure that I am much gratified at finding you greatly gratified at my success. I am glad, darling, that I am able to contribute to your pleasure in life. I am very busy now and have been since you left. I painted a twenty by thirty to-day from nature, and it is a great success. Wind clouds, a plowed field, with a sower and oxen in a road in the foreground. It looks very breezy and like out of doors. I have now thirteen pictures, studies, and sketches. I think, after all, the prisoner is going to prove a decided success. It has been very warm to-day, rather uncomfortable sitting in the sun.

From the Butler collection in The Art Institute of Chicago

EARLY MORNING—TARPON SPRINGS

Then foliage is gradually coming out, and the grass does not make much headway.

I hardly know what to think of California, but have plenty of time to make up my mind. I shall start for home on Wednesday week. When do you expect to go to Milton? I want to get to New York before you go if I can, as I presume I will have to stay in the city a day or two. If I conclude to go to the Yosemite, however, your stay at Milton will be short. Let me know your plans in that event. I have a little work to do this evening, so I will write no more. Every instant is occupied till bedtime now, yet my health is better than usual, as I do a great deal of walking. I have walked about seven miles to-day. Give my love to all.

Yours affectionately,

GEORGE.

GOOCHLAND COURTHOUSE, VA.,
Wednesday, May, 1884

My dear wife:

I received two of your welcome letters yesterday, and should have written last night, but was so busy through the day that I could not bring myself up to writing. The study I wrote you last about I consider the most desirable of all, as I have attained a certain thing which I had not as yet got thoroughly hold of. I feel sometimes provoked that the figure-picture has cost me so much time, but it is doing this that has enabled me to do the other quickly, and besides the figure-picture promises to be all that I aimed at and a remarkable piece of landscape and figure combination; yet what is curious, the modeling of the grass is the most difficult part of it. I want to make one other study, and then I think I shall begin my preparation for moving. I want you to send me a check for twenty-five dollars, as I leave sooner than

Wednesday next. I may go to Richmond and make a sketch of a scene which impressed me very much, and then return by the Shenandoah road to Washington and spend a day there, and I may not have enough.

I shall be with you again in a week.

Yours affectionately,

GEORGE.

He did go to California soon after this, where he painted scenes of the Yosemite Valley and other parts of the State, and later spent several winters in Florida.

That my father was an impressionist in the highest sense of the word cannot be denied, but he abhorred the name and what it stood for in its generally accepted terms. In reply to a criticism of Inness's work which was published in a newspaper which I have entirely lost track of, I find this letter:

TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA

Editor Ledger:

A copy of your letter has been handed to me in which I find your art editor has classified my work among the "Impressionists." The article is certainly all that I could ask in the way of compliment. I am sorry, however, that either of my works should have been so lacking in the necessary detail that from a legitimate landscape-painter I have come to be classed as a follower of the new fad "Impressionism." As, however, no evil extreme enters the world of mind except as an effort of life to restore the balance disturbed by some previous extreme, in this instance say Preraphaelism. Absurdities frequently prove to be the beginnings of uses end-

ing in a clearer understanding of the legitimate as the rationale of the question involved.

We are all the subjects of impressions, and some of us legitimates seek to convey our impressions to others. In the art of communicating impressions lies the power of generalizing without losing that logical connection of parts to the whole which satisfies the mind.

The elements of this, therefore, are solidity of objects and transparency of shadows in a breathable atmosphere through which we are conscious of spaces and distances. By the rendering of these elements we suggest the invisible side of visible objects. These elements constitute the grammar of painting, and the want of that grammar gives to pictures either the flatness of the silhouette or the vulgarity of an over-strained objectivity or the puddling twaddle of Preraphaelism.

Every fad immediately becomes so involved in its application of its want of understanding of its mental origin and that the great desire of people to label men and things that one extreme is made to meet with the other in a muddle of unseen life application. And as no one is long what he labels himself, we see realists whose power is in a strong poetic sense as with Corbet. And Impressionists, who from a desire to give a little objective interest to their pancake of color, seek aid from the weakness of Preraphaelism, as with Monet. Monet made by the power of life through another kind of humbug. For when people tell me that the painter sees nature in the way the Impressionists paint it, I say, "Humbug"! from the lie of intent to the lie of ignorance.

Monet induces the humbug of the first form and the stupidity of the second. Through malformed eyes we see imperfectly and are subjects for the optician. Though the normally formed eye sees within degrees of distinctness and

without blur we want for good art sound eyesight. It is well known that we through the eye realize the objective only through the experiences of life. All is flat, and the mind is in no realization of space except its powers are exercised through the sense of feeling. That is, what is objective to us is a response to the universal principle of truth.

Some things touch one more than another, and loving what touches us agreeably and disliking what touches us disagreeably, we look more at what we love than what we do not love; hence he learns to paint first what he loves best, but our love for certain forms, tones, or things cause us gradually to tolerate other forms, and as connected with those we love through the alchemy of life in various ways, so that we tend eventually to ideas of harmonies in which parts are related by the mind to an idea of unity of thought. From that unity of thought mind controls the eye to its own intent within the units of that idea; consequently we learn to see in accord with ideas developed by the power of life, which also leads us through our own affections. Hence every one sees somewhat differently.

The art of painting is the development of the human mind, and to deny its traditions is the sign of an art fool; but to translate its traditions into new forms is the sign of a progressive art mind full and independent in his own concepts of nature, but bound to the past as the source of his inspiration. Originality outside of this truth is childishness, and its products absurd. The first great principle in art is unity representing directness of intent, the second is order representing cause, and the third is realization representing effect.

When the savage draws his hieroglyphics for the information of his companions, cause and effect are sufficiently con-

GEORGIA PINES

sidered in the intent; all his art is united to an end acknowledged to be legitimate, and any power which sufficiently renders the forms for recognition in that way would be good art to that end. When Raphael drew his Hampton cartoons his drawing, most of it great in the impression given of power to do, was amply sufficient to the end of the story, which impresses one directly—here is great art. When Leighton painted the walls at Kensington the excellent workman so forgot the end in view that the story has to be hunted out,—here is a work with an intent outside of itself as a use, and that intent was to show his skill,—this is bad art, in which an impression is made upon the spectator involving an intent not in order with the one assured. The artist was not one with his subject; without inspiration he was in the sphere of twaddle. This is that very honest and highly respectable kind of humbug in the art world which we are apt to fall into more or less, against which the impression is a protest.

I have tones done on the boards of the loft which I occupy here by a little darky whom I employ to wash brushes and so forth which are very tony. In fact, give me the same impression that did the first Monet it was my luck to see. His had a little more white in it, but the style was about the same. Now, however, Monet decorated an impressionless plane with a dab of paint apparently in childlike imitation of trees, houses, and so forth without substance. Since the beginning "The Art of the Future," as it is called, has developed in a great variety of impressionists whose works I have not seen, as I am not interested in painters who find it necessary to label themselves. I admire the robust ideas of Corbet, but not his realism; that was his curse. It appears as though the Impressionists were imbued with the idea to divest painting of all mental attributes and, overleaping the

traveled road which art has created by hard labor, by plastering over and presenting us with the original pancake of visual imbecility, the childlike naïveté of unexpressed vision.

Later, while discussing the subject of Impressions, he said:

I am seventy years of age, and the whole study of my life has been to find out what it is that is in myself. What is this thing we call life and how does it operate? Upon these questions my ideas have become clearer and clearer, and what I hold is that the Creator never makes two things alike or any two men alike. Every man has a different impression of what he sees, and that impression constitutes feeling, and every man has a different feeling.

Now there has sprung up a new school, a mere passing fad, called Impressionism, the followers of which pretend to study from nature and paint it as it is. All these sorts of things I am down on. I will have nothing to do with them. They are shams.

The fact came to my mind in the beginning of my career. I would sit down before nature, and under the impulse of a sympathetic feeling put something on canvas more or less like what I was aiming at. It would not be a correct portrait of the scene, perhaps, but it would have a charm. Certain artists and certain Philistines would see that and would say: "Yes, there is a certain charm about it, but did you paint it outdoors? If so, you could not have seen it this and that and the other." I could not deny it, because I then thought we saw physically and with the physical eye alone. Then I went to work again and painted what I thought I saw, calling on my memory to supply missing details. The result was that the picture had no charm; nothing about it was

beautiful. What was the reason? When I tried to do my duty and paint faithfully I did n't get much; when I did n't care so much for duty I got something more or less admirable. As I went on I began to see little by little that my feeling was governed by a certain principle that I did not then understand as such.

But these are merely scientific formulæ. Every artist must, after all, depend on his feeling, and what I have devoted myself to is to try to find out the law of the unit; that is, of impression. Landscape is a continued repetition of the same thing in a different form and in a different feeling. When we go outdoors our minds are overloaded; we do not know where to go to work. You can only achieve something if you have an ambition so powerful as to forget yourself, or if you are up in the science of your art. If a man can be an eternal God when he is outside, then he is all right; if not, he must fall back on science.

The worst of it is that all thinkers are apt to become dogmatic, and every dogma fails because it does not give you the other side. The same is true of all things—art, religion, and everything else. You must find a third as your standpoint of reason. That is how I came to work in the science of geometry, which is the only abstract truth, the diversion of the art of consciousness and so on, which I have already mentioned.

And no one can conceive the mental struggles and torment I went through before I could master the whole thing. I knew the principle was true, but it would not work right. I had constantly to violate my principle to get in my feeling. This was my third. I found I was right, and went on in perfect confidence, and I have my understanding under perfect control, except when I overwork myself, when I am liable to get wriggly, like anybody else. Then I shut myself up

with my books and write, applying the principles I have found true in art to pure reasoning on the subject of theology. That is what you see in my pictures, that is the feeling and the sentiment. I have always had it, but have not always understood the principles which govern it.

When I grow weary of painting I take to theology. That is the only thing except art which interests me. In my theory, in fact, they are very closely connected. That is, you may say it is theology, but it has resolved itself gradually into a scientific form, and that is the development which has become so very interesting to me.

CHAPTER X

SUCCESS AND RECOGNITION

NOT until he was past middle life did prosperity smile upon George Inness, but those years of devotion to ideals were to be rewarded, and in a way that few are privileged to experience; the full and complete recognition of his genius.

In the summer of 1878 we went to Montclair, New Jersey, where father rented a little cottage on Grove Street. There we used two little outhouses on the place for studios. Up to this time, and in fact for several years after, the selling of pictures was more or less desultory. But when Mr. Roswell-Smith purchased a large canvas of Mount Washington for five thousand dollars, Pop was for the time being relieved of financial stress and was enabled to paint unhampered for a while. Mr. Roswell-Smith, who later became my father-in-law, was the founder of "The Century Magazine," and through his interest my father's career received a great impetus. Later, Pop being dissatisfied with the Mount Washington canvas, exchanged it for the now famous Niagara, which was painted under rather amusing circumstances. Pop

had been out to see the falls, and he became so fired with an inspiration to paint it that he rushed to the studio of his old friend Selsted, in Buffalo, and rousing him from his bed at an unholy hour, demanded studio, paints, canvas, and brushes, in fact, everything that he needed.

"I must paint, Selsted," he said. "Quick! I can't wait a minute; I must get my impression of the falls down right away." And poor Selsted, like all the rest of us, gave up everything, and was not allowed to use his studio or anything in it until the sketch was made, which I might add was taken from an imaginary point in the middle of the rapids. The finished canvas was later painted in the studio in the old University building on E. Washington Square. It is a large canvas and shows a cool crisp light as of the morning. The sky is delicate gray-blue, flecked with pink-tinged clouds. The distant hills are bedecked with buildings that flash and twinkle in the rosy light. The great curved horse shoe line cuts across the vision and holds one spellbound as he gazes on that mighty rush of green-lit water as it tumbles with crashing force and thunders over the titanic rocks, to rise again in a swirl of maddened fury, in defiance of the chasm far beneath. High above the rim an eagle soars and through the rising mist a rainbow glistens.

Not long after the sale of the Mount Washington,

Benjamin Constant, the great French portrait-painter, came to this country, and proved to be an important factor in the establishment of my father's success and fame. He discovered in George Inness a master of art, and wonderful was the scene of those two great painters exclaiming and gesticulating. Neither could understand the words spoken by the other, but the picture is so vividly before me I shall never forget it. They were seated on the floor, sketches strewn about them, expressions of delight on their faces, hands going in every direction, punctuated with exclamations such as *"Tres bien," "magnifique," "chef-d'œuvre,"* and others.

The outcome of it was that Constant took back to Paris a number of these sketches to show the French artists what had sprung up in America. He brought Inness to the attention of Bouissart-Vallidon & Company, with the advice to buy all the Innesses they could get.

The year after my father's death—that is, in 1895—the following article by Constant appeared in "The New York Times":

When I came to this country for the first time in 1890 I had the pleasure and honor to form an acquaintance with George Inness, who received me at his country house in a most charming manner, and showed me all the landscapes he had there on his easel. Some of these I see again to-day,

after his lamented demise, and being urged by a friend to write a few lines, as I had previously done in 1890 in "The New York Times" about the exhibition of Mr. Richard H. Halsted's collection of Inness's work at the American Art Galleries, I am willing to act as a critic of art, provided painters may be allowed to write on painting. Perhaps I may be permitted to do so, once in a while at any rate, if it be only to please a friend and myself. The moral and physical personality of George Inness has made a lasting impression on my mind. He was naturally nervous, impressionable, sensitive to the richness of coloring, to its enamel, to its material as well as sensitive to the poetical and quick effects of nature. Living as he was in the very midst of the latter, looking about its grandeur, its marvels of light, he especially liked the evenings of autumn, the autumn of his native country. He brought out of it powerful works, full of emotion and painted in a rutilant color. He was always careful, however, to retain for all painting its special qualities of material and enamel, and never tried to put the essential qualities of either pastel or coater colors into oil-painting. Thus he was proceeding from Millet, Jules Dupré, and Rousseau, while preserving his original work. We always proceed from the time in which we live, and the works which have impressed us at the beginning of our career; but our personality comes out, however. Baudry and Chavannes, in their decorative works, proceeded from the Italian masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, although in a different degree; the English school of the beginning of the century had influence over Delacroix. A new art cannot be born in a day; a whole century is hardly sufficient for it. But I must speak now of the works that I like best among Mr. Halsted's collection of Inness work. Number Seven would, if signed by Turner, Millet, or Corot, be worth ten thou-

Owned by George Inness, Jr.

NIAGARA FALLS

sand dollars and over. In my view it is equivalent to the best landscape ever painted by any great landscape-painter. No warm and stormy day in June has ever been felt better or expressed better. Nature has been sometimes seen as if it were asleep in a golden atmosphere, when there was no wind, but an oppressive air full of languor. The sun behind the clouds was not throwing any shade under the trees. Waters were still in the shallow rivers; one could feel that not a single leaf was trembling. Nature was taking her afternoon's nap.

Now, in my opinion, Inness, as I remember him, must have had such a feeling when he painted that magnificent piece of art, which is undoubtedly of the highest order. The coloring of the green tones is positively delightful, for it may be said that no eye was ever more sensitive than Inness's to the richness of the green tones brought about by the summer light. This painting should be at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Number Twenty is brother to number seven, and shows the same skill in coloring the strong light and storms of summer. The coloring of this souvenir of a storm in summer is really exquisite. Turner has never brought together his remembrances of a day like this with more richness of material or a more observing mind. Number Three is a continuation of a series that is a real apotheosis of the sun. Number Fifteen shows white, green tones in a gray, rainy sky, forerunner of a storm, which are enameled in a surprisingly artistic manner. The symphony of the green tones, supported and accompanied by the gray clouds, is masterly scored. Number Six is a good painting, and so is number Thirteen. These lines are but brief homage to true talent. When the time comes, and it will come sooner or later, to do full justice to George Inness, I shall be glad to have been one of the first, perhaps, who felt an artistic emotion in contemplating these paintings, which so clearly show the impres-

sionality of a thorough artist, a lover of nature, and an executor of rare merit.

Some time previous to my father's meeting with Constant, Mr. Thomas B. Clarke had come into his life, and had become one of his closest friends and patrons, through whose persistent faith in Inness's work a number of other patrons were brought to him, among those who made extensive collections, Mr. George I. Seney, Mr. Benjamin Altman, Mr. James W. Ellsworth, and Mr. Richard H. Halsted. So firm became the friendship with Mr. Clarke that my father finally induced him not only to advise him, but to take over the management of his pictures. So excellent was his management and so far had Inness risen to fame that success and recognition came rapidly. He now found himself in the full attainment of a position of ease. For sixteen years, until his death, he sailed his bark through smooth waters. With the financial struggle over he retired from the world of trade and barter, and settled in Montclair, where he bought the old Mapes homestead on Grove Street. Here he built a studio and painted as he had long desired, unhampered by commercial and financial cares. But the end of his struggles did not mean the end of his usefulness. Far from it; for he painted up to the time of his death, and in the last few years of his life he developed a breadth and technic in his work which

closely correspond to the breadth of his mental and spiritual unfolding.

My father was the most modest and unassuming of men. His fame was spread abroad, to be sure, and wherever he went he was treated royally; but he remained to the day of his death the plain, simple-hearted great man that he was. To be made a lion of embarrassed him, and he did not like it; in fact, he saw no reason in it. He lived for his art, and was affected neither by praise nor criticism. The joy of self-expression brought its own reward. My mother told me once, with a merry chuckle, of a visit she and Pop made to The Palmer House, Chicago. As I have said, mother held the purse, and was therefore to judge of just how far they could indulge in the luxury of the famous hostelry; so she engaged a room at a very moderate rate for such a hotel. Father, having discovered that Mr. Palmer had an office in the house, left his card for that gentleman at the desk. After registering, they were shown to their modest quarters, unpacked their bags, and prepared to make themselves at home. A few moments later a bell-boy appeared to inform that a mistake had been made, and the room assigned to them was on another floor. Greatly annoyed at having to repack, my mother expressed her opinion in no uncertain terms of the clerk who had made such a stupid mistake.

However, they were moved, bag and baggage, to the first floor front, and found themselves ensconced in a magnificent suite of rooms. Father was immensely pleased, but mother, thinking the clerk's mistake was assuming alarming proportions, now expressed her mind more freely, and, remonstrating with the boy, insisted that they had engaged no such rooms and refused to stay in them. But the boy was equally insistent that he was only carrying out orders, and left them alone.

"This is ridiculous," said my mother, "these rooms will cost us a fortune, and we must adjust this mistake immediately."

"Oh, well," protested Pop, "we can afford it for one night, and I should like to have the experience of feeling like a potentate."

"No," insisted mother, and as she was about to leave the room to remedy the situation there was a knock at the door, and a boy entered, bearing baskets of beautiful fruit and flowers and a note from Mr. Palmer, saying that he would do himself the honor of calling upon them, and hoped that Mr. and Mrs. Inness would remain as his guests as long as they were in Chicago.

They accepted Mr. Palmer's hospitality, and were treated so royally that even Pop wished for white gloves and a swallow-tail.

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

HOME AT MONTCLAIR

In looking over some old letters I came across this one which tells the story in my father's own words. It is the property of Mr. Thomas B. Clarke, to whom the letter is addressed.

PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO, October 31, 1889

My dear Mr. Clarke:

Just as I was stepping into the carriage on Tuesday for the train I remembered that I had not paid my dues at the Century for the November term, and as I knew Hartley had no more ready money than he needed, I asked him to write to you. I find that I have neglected my own account until there is only about fourteen dollars to my credit, so I inclose my wife's check for the amount.

On our arrival here we took a moderate board at seven dollars, which my wife thought would answer our purpose for the two or three days of our intended stay here. Thinking that Mr. Palmer had an office here, I called upon him as the first best thing to do. As soon as registrations were made, I found myself received with the greatest cordiality, and in a few moments we were occupying D. E. on the first floor front, with every convenience, and a pile of extra dinner-tickets for friends, and a couple of large vases of elegant fruit, enough to last us a week. Of course I had to accept what Mr. Palmer insisted was only a great pleasure to him.

I then called upon Mr. Ellsworth, and then there was another insistence that we should at once make his house our home. Mr. Palmer insists that we shall stay here until Monday at least, so that I shall probably get no nearer the point of our destination before the middle of next week, probably Thursday. My necessary visit to the studio on Monday last

upset me somewhat, but I am feeling a great deal better this morning, and I have no doubt but that I shall be all right in a day or two.

I intended to write to you further about picture matters, but I will leave that for a few days when the ground will be further opened and I shall be in better condition.

Yours truly,

George Inness.

Because of my father's intolerant attitude of other people's opinions where his own work was concerned, he was continually getting into trouble, and but for Mr. Clarke's diplomatic handling of these rather awkward situations many of his patrons would have become totally estranged. One instance of this remains vividly in my mind. A New York gentleman bought a picture from my father that he admired greatly, saying that he would send for it the next day. He had hardly left the studio before Pop began to "tickle it up" a little to carry out a thought. He kept on "tickling it up" until the canvas was an entirely different picture, and one that, I regret to say, had lost rather than gained in the process of tickling.

The next day the gentleman came to the studio to see his picture, and, finding it unrecognizable, insisted that this canvas was not his.

"Yes, it is," replied Inness. "I have changed it just a little to give it snap."

"Why, the picture 's ruined," said the purchaser, "and I refuse to take it."

"Very well," answered my father; "you could n't have it now at any price. Your money cannot buy my art. I give you what I choose, and whether you like it or not is a matter of indifference to me. What right have you to tell me what you like or what you do not like? I am the only one capable of judging my own work. The picture is finer than it was; it had no strength before."

For all his blustering manner, dear old Pop knew that his patron was right and that the picture was ruined, and he knew that he had been a fool to touch it. But he had to do something to cover up his embarrassment and chagrin, so he continued to throw all the blame on his innocent patron, who, he declared, would cut a better figure before a stock-broker's ticker than sitting there telling him how and when to paint. Justly indignant, the gentleman walked out of the studio and to his friend Clarke, who had originally introduced him to Inness, and to whom he told the whole story, declaring that he would never give to "that ranting fool" another chance to insult him. But Mr. Clarke, who understood and loved them both and would not see a break between them, said:

"Never mind, old man. You know Inness well enough to know that he would not intentionally insult

you for the world. He is in a high-strung, nervous condition, and is no doubt suffering this moment to think that he lost his temper and acted like a brute. I will just run around and see him."

Upon entering the studio Clarke noticed immediately the nervous state my father was in, and was wise enough to sit quite still and not refer in any way to the episode which had occurred that morning. Father, ignoring his presence, kept right on painting. It happened to be the canvas in dispute. He was never disturbed by an audience; in fact, he rather liked one, because it gave him an opportunity to talk and to expound his theories. So after painting in silence for a while, he turned to Clarke and said:

"I got in quite a muddle over this in trying to fix the sky. It lacked sparkle and interest. Sometimes, Clarke, it is hard to find just where the thing is wrong; it does n't seem to hitch. It may be in the sky or in the patch of light across the foreground; and then you will find that it is n't that at all, but the fault lies in the composition, and those trees in the right are out of place and mar the breadth and grandeur of the picture. But then the misery of the thing is that you can never get back the thing you had before you touched it. Clarke, if I could only learn to leave a thing alone after I feel that I have what I want! It has been the curse of my life, this changing and trying to carry a

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

INDIAN SUMMER

thing nearer to perfection. After all, we are limited to paint. Maybe, after we get to heaven, we shall find some other medium with which to express our thoughts on canvas. I had this picture very fine, and then I knocked it all to pot. It 's the one our friend bought. He was in here this morning, and we had some words because I changed it. I tell you, Clarke, I shall have to keep these fellows out of here. You had better take the pictures to your rooms and let them see them there, for if you don't, I 'm afraid the canvases never will be done. Sometimes I almost wish I had another trade. But I 'm getting it now; this is going to be the greatest thing I have ever done. Don't you see how brilliant it is? The thing is real. I would rather starve to death than give up art."

Mr. Clarke, who had come into the studio at a later stage of the evolution of the picture than had his friend, had been spared the shock of seeing it in the discouraging stage of transition in which, unfortunately, the gentleman had seen it, and had been justly disappointed. Through that marvelous ability which the master possessed the canvas had been brought back from utter failure to a composition even more beautiful than the original, and it was this that Clarke saw and pronounced good.

"It is a wonderful picture, Inness," he said, "and that fellow is mighty lucky to own it."

"Own it!" snapped my father, flaring up again at the thought of the disagreeable episode with his patron. "He does not own it, and he cannot own it now at any price. I 'm through with him, and I don't want him to come here and bother me with my work."

Clarke did not press the point, but a few days later succeeded in persuading his friend to forget the little unpleasantness that had occurred, and go with him to Inness's studio. When they arrived my father greeted them coldly. The picture was turned face to the wall, and nothing was said regarding it. Inness knew that the picture was good and was so pleased with it that he wanted above everything else to have them ask to see it, only his pride keeping him from bringing it out and saying, "There, that is the greatest thing I ever did." An abstract subject was introduced, however, on art in general which struck a responsive chord, and after a few moments of enthusiasm in explaining some theory Inness forgot about his grievance and became himself again. Whereupon Clarke suggested that he show them the picture that their friend had purchased.

"He has purchased no picture," said my father, coldly, "and he might just as well understand now that I claim the right to paint my pictures as I choose, and the fact that a man has purchased one does not de-

prive me of the right to make any changes in it for the better that I like."

A little smoothing down from Clarke, however, had the effect of oil on troubled waters, and Inness inwardly delighted, brought out the picture. When the patron saw it he was amazed at its beauty, and exclaimed:

"Mr. Inness, if you will let me have this canvas I will accede to your demands and allow you the right to change your pictures whenever you wish."

"All right," laughed my father. "Since you see it in its proper light, I will deliver the canvas to you whenever you want it."

The purchaser said he would send for it and left the room, to return in about five minutes with a man he had picked up on the street, and together they carried the canvas off in triumph.

My father once agreed to send some pictures to the Paris Exposition, and later changed his mind, which brought forth some rather bitter criticism of Mr. Clarke for having influenced him against it, hinting at personal reasons on Clarke's part. The pictures were not sent, and the whole affair blew over, Clarke never knowing that Inness had taken any notice of it one way or the other until the following letter was discovered in an auction sale a few years ago.

The letter was addressed to the editor of the New York "Herald," and is dated March 9, 1889, Montclair, N. J.

Dear Sir:

In your paper of the 8th inst. certain remarks are made concerning Mr. T. B. Clarke in which my name is mentioned.

All I have to say is that as far as I am concerned Mr. Clarke has in no way influenced my action in this matter of exhibition. I have had friends urging me to exhibit to whose influence I did give way so far as to commence finishing several important works which had been lying for some time unfinished in my studio; but as I had really no heart in the matter, I could not find the requisite energy to do myself justice. Besides, money was before me to be earned, which I did not feel that I could afford to lose.

As for the charge of the want of patriotism, I care about as much as I do for the wind of the wood.

To the friends who have supported me am I alone responsible as an artist, and it is my proper business in this relation to make their interest one with my own, and I am satisfied that my interests are not to be served through the Art Commission.

I am free to confess that I am greatly indebted to Mr. Thomas B. Clarke for his determined faith in my art, and his persistent efforts to find purchasers for my works; and if art is of use and my reputation sound, then is T. B. Clarke deserving of gratitude from the public, and not of contumely.

What Mr. Clarke has done for me through the extent of my ability to win success he has done for many others through the extent of their ability to win success.

My art is not in its nature of a popular character, and

had it not been for the generosity of Mr. Roswell Smith, Mr. George I. Seney, and Mr. B. Altman, together with the persistent efforts of Mr. Clarke, I should probably still be in the drag.

Yours respectfully,

GEORGE INNESS.

To the editor of
The New York "Herald."

As I have said before, the development and unfolding of my father's nature in the latter years of his life were not limited to his art, and his activities did not confine themselves to painting.

It was at this period of his life that he did most of his writing and research work along spiritual lines. In 1877 he wrote this letter to my sister, Mrs. Hartley, which shows the trend of his thought:

NEW YORK, Feb. 13, 1877

My dear Nellie:

Although I have neglected to write to you as soon as you might have expected me to, the answer to your question will probably take so much paper that I will leave other matters and commence with that.

I perceive from your question that you are beginning to think, in fact that your spiritual faculties are beginning to unfold, and that you are now experiencing your first temptation, which is to leave the ideas in which you have been educated because you fear that they may disturb you in the enjoyment of your natural desires.

Every individual man or woman born into this world is an offshoot of that Infinite Mind or Spirit which we call God.

God creates in us sensation, and through it we are made conscious of the world we live in. A world which we eventually find to be a continual changing state, but a state which forms the basis of all our knowledges. This state is continually changing because our spirits individualized here, or born, created as distinct from the Infinite, gradually recede from natural surroundings into what each one eventually becomes, viz., the embodiment of his or her own love or desires. Now, as your own love or desire eventually becomes the center from which all your activities must flow, it behooves you to see that your love or what you desire is rational and not the effect of a mere natural impulse, which may be one thing to-day and another thing to-morrow, thus disturbing the orderly centralizing of your spirit to a state of happiness. Now, the center of all life is the Lord himself, the mystery of whose existence is the mystery of our own, and which will gradually unfold itself to us as we learn to subject our natural impulses to ideas of use and make them eventually our delight and the consequent center of our spirit life, which then becomes one with the Lord Himself. This unfolding of intelligence in us takes place in varying degrees to eternity, and is a great source of happiness or of unhappiness, as we are obedient or disobedient to the truth which we know; for this truth becomes in us the voice of conscience, which cannot be disobeyed with impunity. Now, what the spirit sees is not the truth, but only an appearance of truth. For instance, we say the sun rises and the sun sets, but this is not true except as an appearance, and so it is with every fact of the natural world. The truth is the Lord Himself, Who creates and controls all which is thereby made to appear to us. This truth reveals itself as from mind to mind, and is from the beginning one God, whose children we all are. God first reveals Himself

to the innocent mind as command which it is impossible to disobey and live. Next to the intellect as truth that it may become rational or act in the order of use which is the preservation of innocence. Third to the will as good or as a power conjoining or making one the innocence of pure affection and the operation of the intellect creating in His children an eternally increasing state of happiness. Now, we fall from innocence when we indulge the senses and accept their evidence as truth to guide us to happiness. When the truth is that the gratification of the senses becomes more difficult and eventually impossible as the body becomes aged, and that those spirits who indulge them and are led by their allurements become dull, miserable, and wretched for the want of life—God. Consequently the truth is, thou shalt love the Lord. This is the command which innocence accepts as its guide and its savior, and it becomes its protection against the allurements of the senses.

Now, the Bible is the word of God or the truth of life in its intellectual form, and by obedience to its commands we become recipients of life itself as an inflowing principle of goodness uniting all our thoughts to innocent desires, thereby creating in us a love of the highest and most beautiful uses, which is to extend the Lord's love, which is harmony itself, throughout the world we live in. Thus we become spheres of what we are of innocence, truth, and goodness, seen by angels as spheres of the love and wisdom of God. If you would have this life, read the Word and obey the commandments. If you find yourself at fault, look to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only example of this sphere of innocence, and Who is therefore within it and forms it. He will communicate to you the power to deny the allurements of sense or your outer self and attain to the love of duty which is the road to heaven or the happiness of

the inner life. This life is the eternal future ever present to all who love the Lord more than self. That is a life within the commandments rather than a life outside of or without them.

That you may be obedient to the law of life, and thereby enter into the enjoyment of it, is the sincere wish of your affectionate father.

I have known him to stay in bed as long as two or three days at a time, writing and thinking, and in answer to my solicitations in regard to his health he would reply:

"Oh, no, not ill; only resting and having a good time. Don't have to dress, and I believe your mother has a new suit for me."

Pop hated new clothes, as he hated the barber and the dentist, and mother, who had given his measure to the tailor, would order three or four suits at a time, and when she thought necessary, would remove the old ones after Pop had retired and put new ones in their place. But try as she might, Pop was extremely careless. He never knew or cared what he looked like.

When he was at the zenith of his career, with an income of perhaps twenty thousand dollars a year or more, a fortune in those days, he was walking one cold winter morning down Broadway. He was clad in an old gray ulster. I am sure the buttons were on, for mother always looked to his grooming before

From the Butler collection in The Art Institute of Chicago

THREATENING

she let him out of the house; however, on this occasion the buttonhole on the skirt of the ulster was holding the button at the throat. It was cold, and father was crouched down in his collar. He was bent over, as he was very round-shouldered, when a man accosted him, and in a kindly voice said:

"My man, would you like to earn a quarter of a dollar?"

Father, who always appreciated a joke, even though the shaft were aimed at himself, replied:

"Yes; I should like to earn a quarter of a dollar."

"Well," said the man, "I 'm a photographer, and I see that you have a very remarkable head. If you will come to my studio and let me take some pictures of you, I will give you twenty-five cents."

"No," replied Pop, "I don't think I will go. You photographers generally have your shops at the top of the house, and I am pretty short of wind."

"It 's only four flights up," urged the photographer, "and it 's just around the corner. We will take it as slowly as you wish."

So father agreed, and followed his new-found benefactor to the top of the building. He was then placed in a chair, and the clamps adjusted behind his head. The photographer took several shots, and then said:

"Thank you very much. Here is your money.

Now let me give you a word of advice. You can do better than you are now doing. As I have remarked, you have a very remarkable head, and if you will go among the artists, there is a studio building on Tenth Street, and knock on any door. I 'm pretty sure you can do better for yourself than you are now doing."

"I don't know about that," said my father. "I don't like artists; I 've had experience with them before."

"Oh, so you are a model, then?"

"No, I 'm not a model, but I 've used models."

"That 's interesting. Then you are an artist?"

"Well, I suppose so. I don't know that I can lay claim to the title of artist, but I paint for a living."

"Why, that 's very interesting. Do you exhibit?"

"Yes, oh, yes, I exhibit."

"And," continued the photographer, "may I ask where?"

"Anywhere that I can get the chance; The Academy of Design, Chicago, Philadelphia, London, Paris, and different towns; in fact, anywhere where I think I might be able to sell a picture."

"Why," said the photographer, condescendingly, "I know all the artists; but I surely don't know you. Who are you? What is your name?"

"My name is Inness."

"Not George Inness?"

"That 's my name."

"George Inness, the landscape-painter—Inness?"

"Well," replied my father, "that 's my name, and I paint landscapes."

"My dear sir, come into this room a moment." And as they entered, the photographer pointed to a small canvas on the wall, among many others. "Who painted this picture?" he asked.

"I did," was Pop's reply.

Then he grasped my father by the hand and said:

"Mr. Inness, I have long wanted to meet you. There 's no man in your profession that I admire so much. And say, Mr. Inness, give me back that twenty-five cents."

"Never," chuckled my father; "but if you will come downstairs, I 'll blow you to a drink." At this time my father also had a studio on Fifty-fifth Street, New York, where things were very lively. Pictures were being sold at a rapid rate, and art in general under his pioneering had received a tremendous impetus. The younger men were returning from abroad. New ideas and new men had sprung up around him, and there were plenty of fellow-artists for Pop to worry and delight.

We had great difficulty in making my father sign his pictures. He was greatly opposed to it, saying

that a work of art was a work of art, no matter who signed it, or if it were not signed at all.

There are many spurious Innesses on the market to-day. Every year I am shown canvases which are "known to be" Innesses that my father never saw.

A man once came to me with a small canvas and declared that he had an Inness, that there was absolutely no question as to its authenticity and that he considered it one of George Inness's masterpieces.

I examined the canvas carefully, and turning to the gentleman, said: "You are possibly aware that my father believed in the doctrines of Emanuel Swedenborg, which teach that when we leave this earthly life we enter a spiritual life which enables us to continue the same pursuits that we have followed upon this earth, only in a higher and more exalted state. This doctrine my father taught me, and I believed it, but am rather skeptical now, for this picture which must have been painted in the spirit world is decidedly inferior to the work my father did on earth."

"Why, what do you mean?" he questioned eagerly.

"Just take a look at the signature and date, and you will see that it was painted in 1896. Now, as George Inness died in '94, it must have been painted in the spirit world, and is certainly not worthy of the master."

CHAPTER XI

THE PASSING OF GEORGE INNESS

IN 1894 my father's health began to break, and his physicians recommended a trip abroad. He and my mother sailed to Scotland and went to the little town of the Bridge-of-Allan, where for a time his health seemed to improve and to regain its usual vigor.

Late on the afternoon of August 3 he suggested to my mother that they take a drive, and that while she was dressing he would stroll about and look at the sunset. He went out to a point where he could best see the flaming sky, which was unusually beautiful that evening. A sunset had always moved him to the deepest emotions, and as he gazed he was filled with an ecstasy too profound, a pain too exquisite, for the frail earthly body. Just as the big red ball went down below the horizon he threw his hands into the air and exclaimed, "My God! oh, how beautiful!" and fell stricken to the ground.

A lad who was standing near by rushed to him and said:

"Are ye in liquor, mon?"

"No," gasped my father; "I am dying. Take me up-stairs to my wife." In a few moments he passed away in the arms of the woman he loved better than any one else in the world, and on to those realms of transcendent beauty of which he had dreamed, where sunsets are painted without paint.

When my father's body was brought back from Scotland it was placed in state in the Academy of Design, and the funeral was held in those rooms, an honor bestowed on only a few of the elect. It is true that in life the academy was slow to acknowledge George Inness, fifteen years elapsing between his election as Associate and his election as full Academician, the latter occurring in 1868. But when he was recognized, it was with full and complete recognition.

As I read over the press-notices of my father's funeral, and review the hundreds of clippings cut from every paper in the country, for even the small and unknown papers wrote of his death, and in the larger cities extra papers were sold on the streets telling of the death of the great American painter and mourning his loss, I feel that I must quote directly from them.

On August 24, 1894, the New York "Times" published the following article:

Inness, to whom a Hellenic people would have raised

statues, received yesterday the most delicately impressive homage that the modern world can pay.

He had been great enough to deserve the name of artist, which is grander than everything, and the members of the Academy of Design, their friends and the representatives of the larger class, who, hopeless of emulating him, at least tried to understand his work, were united in the services held in the rooms, where his personality had, for a quarter of a century, expressed its admirable distinction in imperishable paintings.

Strength and implacable serenity had been easily read in life in the expression of his face, vigorously modeled, and the eye of which were profound and mystic, while the forehead, pure as the entablature of a Greek temple, was radiant with interior light.

Yet he had known the envy of rivals, the hatred of fools, cold indifference, the suffering of those he loved, atrociously mingled with fever of creative fervor, and all the misfortunes, accidents, ridiculous annoyances and crimes of fate allied in perpetual vexation against the genius of man.

In the artistic circle of which his mortal envelope was the center yesterday, Inness's long baptism of labor and pain could not be realized. There were impulsive thoughts only of the morning landscapes, tender, vaporous, ideal, where leaves imperceptibly tremble in a soft undecided light and enchanting visions in the foliage furtively glance at dark fountains faintly whitening; of evening landscapes, inflamed from skies where walls and citadels crumble into melting gold; of heights that Seraphita climbed, and of all the rhapsodies of epic poems which Inness impressed for Americans in accurate records of their country's widely magnificent natural scenery.

Phidias himself, who knew the secrets of his art, could not

have sculptured the figure of an imitator, and to make a camp follower none could think of the immortal Indra on his chariot, drawn by horses of azure, or of Zeus, Clarious or Tegeus, at once god of ether and god of light. None could think yesterday of Inness at any period of his career vanquished or feeble, since he is splendidly triumphant in his art, and doubtless already perceives with new senses, as he expected in his Swedenborgian confidence, the peaceful glory of beauty and the silent music of the stars. He was the very reverse of an imitator, and his long years of suffering in the most hideous of mundane circles, the one where great works are received in mute unconcern, were his penalty for being one of the greatest artists. None could think yesterday that there was humiliation for the public in the fact that wealth had not flown into Inness's studio at once, as he deserved, like metal in the streets after the burning of Corinth. But the reflection comes inevitably now and makes more dreadful than chance of error in over-appreciation, the fault of not recognizing genius at its first appearance.

The ceremony at the Academy of Design was simpler than any impression which its relation may convey. Inness disdained glory even more than money. He has obtained glory more solid, more durable and more universal than many great men of his time. But he never courted it or made the slightest sacrifices in its favor. Without hoping for success, he tried to satisfy his refined instinct for the beautiful. He asked of color to express the soul, the thought, the mysterious attitude of the intimate being which is in nature, and he succeeded by force of passionate endeavor. Pompousness did not illuminate his life and would not have fitted his obsequies.

The casket of silver and velvet was covered with palm

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

THE BATHERS

leaves and wreaths of white roses, ivy and lilies of the valley. The ribbons were violet. On a pedestal the fine bronze bust of Inness by Hartley stood at the foot of the casket, and its eyes had a life-like glance. The paintings shone in their usual places on the walls, in all their gaiety. Only the balustrade at the stairs was draped in black. The flag was flying at half mast. The air in the room had the perfume of flowers, not of incense, and the minister, solemn but not grave, spoke in pleasantly modulated tones of irrepressible conviction. He stood in the arch separating the council room from the long reception room, in front of the casket that tall palmetto leaves covered. Without a gesture, his head a little inclined, he told the interpretations of the Arcana Cœlestia, the state of death which is changed to a higher life, the eternal humanity of the Father, the necessity of works for salvation, that faith alone may not procure, and the state of the spiritual world, which has the same relation to the natural world as the soul to the body. Those who knew Inness knew how impatient of contradiction he was in his religious faith. He talked for hours of the Swedish philosopher.

Neither by geometrical nor physical nor metaphysical principles had Swedenborg succeeded in reaching and grasping the infinite and the spiritual, or in elucidating their relation to man and man's organism, though he had caught glimpses of facts and method which he thought only lacked confirmation and development. He was a man who won respect, confidence and love of all who came in contact with him. Though people might disbelieve in his visions, they feared to ridicule them in his presence.

His theosophic system was founded on the point of view that God must be regarded as the divine man. His essence is infinite love. His manifestation, form or body is infinite

wisdom. "Divine love is the self-subsisting life of the universe," Inness quoted. From God emanates a divine sphere which appears in the spiritual world as a sun, and from the spiritual sun again proceeds the sun of the natural world. . . . In God there are three infinite and uncreated degrees of being, and in many and all things corresponding three degrees, finite and created. They are love, wisdom, use; or end, cause and effect. The final ends of all things are in the Divine mind, the causes of all things in the spiritual world, and their effects in the natural world. . . ."

The minister's eloquence had tenderness, not enthusiasm, and it came to an end in a prayer and benediction of gentle, crystal clearness.

There was an artistic inclination in his well made phrases when he spoke of Inness's conception of nature as all symbolical, and of his art to reproduce this, not in the crude forms of outward expression that the common mind may easily grasp, but in spiritual suggestions.

An artist might not have expressed better a sense of the aristocracy of art, the exaltation of the best in everything which it signifies and the religious inspiration which it demands, since genius is not logical, has only perception, and attains its highest flight in pure ecstasy. The sentiment sent a thrill of appreciation in the audience of artists that nothing more sensually expressive might have produced.

They sat on sofas, chairs and benches of the reception room and formed a compact crowd, prolonged into a tall black mass, in the vestibule. They sat around members of the family in the council room, bright as the cool sacristies of the ancient monasteries.

The light that came through the small colored window-panes made the scene resplendent with an undefinable grace. There was not an unimpressed person among the painters,

poets and sculptors there, to whom art itself is a religion intolerant and jealous. There were only thoughts, minds and conceptions heartily united in Inness's vision of the ladder of men and angels, the highest line of which disappears in pure sidereal light, and in their own vision of long lines of artists in the front rank of which stands Inness.

The sermon and eulogy of the Rev. Dr. J. C. Ager were listened to with the deepest attention. He was for many years the personal, close and intimate friend of George Inness, and stood closer to him than any other man. A man of artistic instinct, there was always a bond of the closest sympathy and interest between Pastor Ager and Painter Inness. This much the audience, especially the artists, knew, and the eulogy, coming from such a source, possessed a peculiar significance and interest for the hearers.

The Rev. Dr. Ager prefaced his personal remarks by a series of running quotations from the Bible to point and enforce the Swedenborgian doctrine of the hereafter.

"This that we call death," said he, "is not death. It is but the entrance to another state. Here in this life, on this world, we develop only the primary faculties of life. This is our initial stage. Here we begin to open our faculties. Here on this earth we have the opportunity to make a complete choice between good and evil. Death sets us free from the conditions of this life and sends us into the future life, which lies alongside this. There we will be no more subject to the laws of space and time." The minister closed his Bible.

"This was in substance," he continued, looking upward with folded arms, "the religious faith of this brother, who has passed on into the higher life. If his voice could be now heard he would emphasize the doctrines which I have stated.

"It is hardly possible for me to deal with the professional character and position of George Inness. I believe, with many artists, that his fame will be a lasting one, and has not yet by any means reached its limit. It was my lot to know him at the somewhat critical point of his life when he was drifting away from every definite belief, and had just begun to find in the writings of Swedenborg a solution of his difficulties.

"Those of you who knew George Inness knew how intense a man he was. That word 'intense' perhaps better describes him than any word in the language. He was an intense man. He was a genuine man. He was a true genius. He had little sympathy with those who did not share his beliefs. Perhaps I should not say sympathy, but certainly no sense of companionship. To many, I know, he seemed ungenial, cold. But those who knew him well understand the reason for this opinion of him.

"His opinions, beliefs, convictions were everything to him. If he had a conviction, that conviction was the truth, simply because he saw it, and not because he arrived at a conviction by any cold and formal process of reasoning or logic. This intuitive perception of truth is the characteristic of genius. That is the way George Inness reached his conclusions. In Swedenborg George Inness found the basis for his theory of art. He found there the true solution for all the problems of expression. To him all nature was symbolic—full of spiritual meaning. He prized nothing in nature that did not stand for something. That was the secret of his theory of art. He cared for no picture that did not tell a story; not necessarily to common minds by this kind of symbolism, but telling a story to the feelings which it suggested, and to the thought to which it gave expression.

"This philosophy of art, as some of you know, was im-

measurably dear to George Inness. Out of it all his pictures sprang. He was as genuine in his own life as he was in everything else. In religion he was as intense as he was in art, and as dogmatic. But with all of his intensity of feeling and purpose he had the gentleness of a woman.

"We do not know what the rest of the world will think of George Inness, now that he has gone, but we who knew him know that that other life into which he has gone will not be to him one of inactivity. All his powers will find there a more active development. You who knew him know that he was sometimes impatient of his own limitations. Often he was lost in fits of despondency because of what he considered to be his lack of success. In the life to which he has gone there will be no limitations of his genius."

In the absence of Thomas W. Wood, the president of the National Academy of Design, who is in Europe, the memorial services were presided over by H. W. Robbins, the vice-president. Notwithstanding the short notice which was given of the service and despite the fact that this is the season when artists are scattered over almost the whole globe, gathering material for their canvases, there was a large attendance at the services. Some of those who were there traveled many miles to the city to pay their last tribute of love and esteem to the memory of the great American painter.

The winter following the death of George Inness a memorial exhibition was held in New York, of which the following gives an account:

"The galleries of the American Fine Arts Society were well filled last evening when the first view of the collection of paintings by the late George Inness was given. The

paintings were hung in the three large rooms. An orchestra furnished music from eight o'clock until nine, when Parke Godwin made an address.

Mr. Godwin spoke in the north gallery to four or five hundred people. His address was mainly eulogistic of Mr. Inness, and although he talked for three quarters of an hour, the interest of his listeners never flagged. Mr. Godwin was frequently applauded when he made very eloquent tributes to the genius of the great painter. He told of the many adversities Mr. Inness had been subjected to, and compared him to other great painters who had triumphed over hardship early in their careers.

"But adversities are not always hindrances," said Mr. Godwin. "Let us look for an instant at the flowers of the field—the yellow violet and the lily, which are nurtured among innumerable difficulties, and yet are among the fairest of flowers. The English primrose is an example. It is the most delicate, and yet perhaps frailly beautiful, of all flowers, and yet, as the poet says, it is

> "Nursed in the whirling storms,
> And cradled in the winds."

Then he referred to the hardships and triumphs of Turner, Keats and Burns. "Inness," Mr. Godwin said, "was met at the beginning of his career by a dire want of educational opportunities and also by want of an audience. At the outset he was hindered, for art received no recognition or encouragement in this country at that time. When I came here sixty years ago there were only two academies of design in the country; one here and one in Philadelphia. There were no students leagues or other art societies. You scarcely know the public's indifference to the fine arts in those times. What Inness received to aid him in his life

profession he received only in the studio of a genial Frenchman. Inness had to work his way against the greatest odds.

"In his early days artists in this country said that his familiarity with foreign painters would injure his originality and detract somewhat from the freshness of a purely American painter. They might as well have said that a man of letters should not read books."

The speaker went on to compare George Inness to foreign painters, showing that although possibly he had been influenced slightly by the styles of many of them, he stood alone and original. Mr. Godwin spoke of the likeness of Inness's foliage to that of certain French painters and compared his manner of depicting woodlands to that of Rousseau. In closing Mr. Godwin said:

"You could take two or three of the pictures from these walls, show them to any expert critic, asking him by whom they were painted, and be sure of his answer. They would be known from among hundreds. No one but George Inness could have painted them.

"Joshua Reynolds, when complimented on one of his famous paintings, said, 'there are eight or ten pictures on that one canvas.' And yet I am told that one of the sheets of canvas in this gallery contains twenty-six pictures. The secret of George Inness's success was that he was never satisfied. He ever strove for something that was above, beyond and better."

In the description of "Florida Morning," which appeared in the Boston "Transcript," on March 19, 1897, Mr. Walter Church describes most admirably the real Inness through the description of one of his pictures. The article is entitled "George Inness, the color poet." He said:

To some art lovers the most attractive picture in the Jordan gallery is the "Florida Morning" of George Inness. He was America's greatest landscape painter—a student worker whose native sweetness was not spoiled by any school. He was great enough to choose the good wherever found and yet remain true to himself, because he himself was true.

He was as tender as Corot, as sincere as Rousseau. Dupré was not more intense, nor Diaz more expansive. One of his best lovers said, "Inness finds the Garden of Eden everywhere." Sometimes he was so enthused by the spiritual that he seemed careless of externals, at least to those who dwell in the external. Inness was inspired by the chivalry of art; the genial soul hospitality that cherished frank comradeship with all good, and by the very force of his example "He drove the money changers from the temple." Though it is said of his pictures that the last one you see always seems the best, yet his "Florida Morning" has a peculiar interest that no other picture can ever have. It was his last picture—painted in 1894—not long before he went away to foreign lands, and then passed on to that higher life, for which he was fitted by the patient, loving, trusting work of his life with us here. It was the farewell color-song of that mystic swan, whose coming brought blessing, and whose going away left no successor.

Inness was ahead of his age in translating the "cabala" of nature—and it is not strange that the keynote of his last picture was unique interpretation of divine motherhood.

A mother follows her little child, whose outstretched arms and slanting form tell of her eager joy at the first sight of home. They have just come up out of the sinking shadows into the glory of the morning, and high on the tree-boles the sunlight has blazed the pathway to their journey's happy

THE HAY FIELD

end. The atmosphere is full of veiled visions of something sweet to come. It is the temperate zone flowering in the tropics. You recognize the beautiful place and yet you cannot remember where you ever saw it. The growing grasses nod to you, and you know they would "flatter your feet." Unseen orange blossoms throw you kisses of welcome. The trees are familiar friends and woo you to their inner temples, where they know you delight to go. The skies sympathize with you, and overshadowed by the divine spirit, promise you the rain that saves. You feel that the soul who evoked this vision was not content with the Ararat found after many days, and sought Zion, not in rest but in helpful work, while echoing the songs that Mother Nature sang. It is a painting full of pictures, all of which make melody. Strike your deepest chord on the piano, hold the keys and listen. Those three tones—the holy trinity of sound—multiply into a weird orchestral anthem which leads your soul among new delights. So it is with this matin, "Gloria in Excelsis." It is a picture to live with, for it will chord with every living mood, echo all beautiful thoughts and endow you with a wealth of its own. Are you busy? Glance at its flowers, and know that the bees are working with you. Would you dream? The unseen hammock under that tree awaits you, and the flower-blessed air is full of unseen shapes of beauty. Do you weep? Those clouds are ready to weep with you and soften your grief into joy. Could you sing? Then join the wordless song in your soul to the ever varying overture of those colors. But when you would pray, you need only to read what Inness has written there and say, Amen.

CHAPTER XII

THE ART OF GEORGE INNESS

IN the preceding chapters I have given you the life and letters of George Inness, and any attempt on my part to write of his art seems futile, as so much has already been written on the subject by pens far more facile than mine. As I read over the many articles that have been written on my father's art, his aims, his theories, and his color, so beautifully expressed by Mr. Daingerfield and others, I find that these so thoroughly record my own feelings and understanding that I feel constrained to stop. On the other hand, knowing my father so intimately, and living as I did for many years in the closest companionship with him, I feel that a review of his art would not go amiss here, and if I repeat the thoughts of those who have already written of Inness, I hope that I shall not be accused of plagiarism.

George Inness was in the highest sense of the word a colorist. By color I do not mean the daubing of bright pigments on canvas, yards and yards of which can be found in our public exhibitions of to-day, color

as expressed by our up-to-date painter, the one who scoffs at everything old fashioned. As my friend Thomas Moran said, "They seem to be trying to discover a new way to paint."

It would be belittling art too much for me to dwell on the self-styled "Cubist" or "Futurist," as they have no more place in art than any other obscene degenerate. I mention them here only because the public crowded their exhibitions and men paid money for their disgusting display.

George Inness never sought new ways to paint, he was ever striving to render nature as she is to one of pure thought and high ideals. He tried to interpret her, to tell the truth about her, to tell the world of her beauty, of her coquetry, and sometimes of her tragedy. He depicted fields and sky, trees, mountain-peaks, streams, and valleys, and the pranks that light and shade played upon her; and sometimes storms that hurled themselves upon the earth as though intent upon her destruction, and the sun that thrust away the fearsome clouds and clothed her in a glory of color such as few but George Inness could depict.

Color to George Inness did not mean red, yellow, and blue, but a harmonious blending and arranging of these colors that would suggest light and air, heat and cold, a suggestion of the color that is more brilliant than the colors themselves. We speak of his

pictures as "intense in color." So they are, but not by gobs of pigment that make up the color sense of so many of our modern landscapists. I might give names and descriptions to illustrate, but it would not be discreet to turn critic and make comparisons further than to say that the stuff that is often paraded in our Fifth Avenue galleries and our exhibitions, with its distorted drawing and gobs of crude pigment, give one absolutely no sense of color, and to a man so sensitive to the truth and poetry of nature as my father was would seem a most horrible distortion.

Color is not paint. A sense of color is obtained by arranging the three primary colors, red, yellow, and blue, so that they will make a harmony, and so blending them that they will give a sense of light and warmth that is felt in nature. When it gives a bright vivid feeling we call it "color," when it gives an even subtle luminosity, as in Corot, we call it "tone." These two combined give the very glory of nature. Quality is that indescribable something that permeates the whole tone of a picture and gives it the sense of fullness, depth, and completeness. To have a colorful picture with quality of tone, the colors must be complimentary. A red must not jar against a blue; the blue and red must be toned to harmonize. One color coming against another will so change that color that it is hard to believe that it is the same pigment

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AUTUMN OAKS

that was mixed on the palette. If one paints a tone of black and white, making a light gray sky, and then paints in white clouds against it, it will look gray, but if the clouds are given a pinkish tone, the sky will change from gray to blue. White paint never gives the sense of light. It must be modeled, so to speak, with other tones to give contrast, to express light. The white or whatever color used must be in contrast to the forms around it. If a picture is painted all in sunlight, and the colors are imitated as the artist thinks he sees them, the picture will not express light. It will be merely a hodgepodge of pigment and a mass of paint, as many Plein-air or flat-sunlight pictures are; but if forms are painted in in shadow, a contrast is established, and if these shadow forms are kept full and permeated with the general tone and color of the picture, there is a pleasant harmony that lends beauty to the whole.

Some artists have no tone or color sense, and their pictures, no matter how well done, are stupid and without charm. Some have a feeling for bright pigments without tone. These pictures are horrible and discordant. The tonal artist is delightful, and when he has this tonal sense combined with grace of form, as Corot had, he reaches a height which very few attain. Now, all this George Inness has, combined with the most vivid sense of brilliant color, which

brings his canvases to those heights which none has surpassed.

Take the "Autumn Oaks" in the Metropolitan Museum. Here we have a chance to revel in a wealth of color—bright, vivid reds and blues and yellows, grays and greens. It is a wonderful composition, and as daring in its conception as it is beautiful in drawing and construction. The scene is the autumn of the year, when nature is changing all her robes and dons fantastic hues. Here the artist, with consummate skill and knowledge, has let his fancy out and piled color upon color with a delight that takes him in the midst of what he loves. Was it done from nature? No. It could not be. It is done from art, which molds nature to its will and shows her hidden glory.

In this little canvas Inness strives to show the wonders of an autumn scene. He shows us a clump of oaks all in red, and to accentuate this red and make it more intense, he puts a cool, green tree in front. The vivid green that is on the grassy slope he checks with a deep shadow in the foreground to concentrate the light, and then to give a new sensation, he dashes in some dark-green trees beyond. Fearing this note is too severe, he deftly thrusts a golden hickory between them and the oak to bring us back to riot in the saturated color. Then he takes us down below

the hill to catch our breath and rest in meadows filled with placid light.

You will find that in this picture Inness has painted very frankly. All the local color is put on full and free. The canvas has then been glazed, I should say, with some such tone as sienna, to give richness and depth to the colors; then he has painted on the lights again with opaque pigments of red, yellow and green to give firmness and intenseness to the lights. But he has left the glazed color in the shadows. That gives transparency and atmosphere. A shadow or dark hole is always transparent in nature, and one can look into it. If it were painted opaque, it would be like a patch of dark on the surface of the canvas, and would lack the sense of looking through it. Shadows always have a transparent quality, and light is always opaque, which gives the brilliancy.

I was in an artist's studio one day when he showed me a portrait with a dark-gray background. "I can't make that go back," he said. "What 's the matter?" The picture was dry, and I induced him to glaze the background over with a thin film of black. It lowered the tone, to be sure, but it made it retire, and it gave the appearance of being seen through into space. He said: "I never heard of that before. It 's good."

To paint a girl's blue dress, for instance, one might

use blue and white with other tones, and model it up to show the folds; but the thing looks dull and flat. Then glaze it all over with cobalt and paint up the lights again, and it will have a life and sparkle that it never had before.

I know that few artists paint in this way, but I am giving George Inness's method, which was also Titian's. I do not mean to say that all painting should be done in this way. There are many subjects that should be treated differently. A mural painting that is to be light in key and seen from a long distance should be painted boldly and opaquely to make it carry. I am speaking here only of Inness's pictures and of how he did them. His are easel pictures that must be examined closely to trace the delicate subtle tones that give the very breath of nature as felt by the poet mind that wrought them.

Glance at "The Spring Blossoms," also in the Metropolitan Museum, a very wonderful canvas. It is Inness in another mood. He has left the wild riot of the autumn color to sit beneath the apple-tree and watch the blossoms as they tremble in the sleepy sun that is warming up the earth, and throws an opalescent light on all about. See the delicacy of touch. He has been afraid to touch even the pencil-marks for fear of one harsh note that might disturb the blush and make the petals fall.

THE GREENWOOD

Now turn to that great piece of painting, "Evening at Medfield." See the willow-stumps that throw their arms out to the golden sky. All the rest is veiled in a luminous shadow form out of which a cow plods home to rest; and as we look we feel the twilight fade, and turn away content. The day is done.

You will find by looking closely at this picture that it has been painted on a clean white canvas, contrary to his usual method of painting and repainting. The colors of the landscape have been frotted, or scrubbed in, very thinly, the texture of the canvas being visible through the film of paint. The local color of the shadow is imitated by mixing greens with umber or some such color, and then with a delicate use of gray he traces out the forms of the stone wall, the trunks of trees, and the road that leads you over the bridge. The opaque gray, dragged over the under color, gives one the sense of different textures, and though the whole is nothing more than a wash, gives the feeling of solidity. Now, he paints in the sky, a golden yellow, in an entirely different way. He lays the paint on thick and solid, and unless we know his process, we feel that it has no connection with the landscape. In other words, it is crude and disappointing. But when this is dry, he glazes it all over with raw sienna, which brings the sky into harmony with the rest of the picture and gives it a vibrant glow, and you have

before you a twilight sky that is brilliancy itself.

Take "The Greenwood," in my opinion one of the greatest examples of landscape-painting ever done, or shall we say nature painting? Though it is a superb composition, there is no pictorial prettiness in it. It is simply nature, outdoor nature pure and simple, a scene that few but Inness would select. There is nothing in this canvas to attract the buyer. I heard a dealer speak of it as a hard seller. Yes, a hard seller to the man whose art sense consists in picture-painting. "The Greenwood" is not picture-painting. It is nature, and grand, true nature. The very plainness of the subject makes its grandeur, and the breadth and simplicity of its treatment convey its wonder. You emerge from a wood. Everything is green—green grass, green trees, green everything, except a patch of sky that appears under the trees at the left of the picture. This patch of sky is crisp and cool and makes you quicken your step, as it puts life and vigor into your lungs. And looking about, you feel it 's all outdoors and all your own, shared only with the girl who strolls through the wood to fetch the cows home from the pasture in the strip of light beyond. But she will pass and leave it all to you again. Herein lies one of the great charms of Inness. Where he introduces a figure, though it is only a dot of light and shade, a little speck of color,

it moves and has a grace of form that only a great draftsman can give.

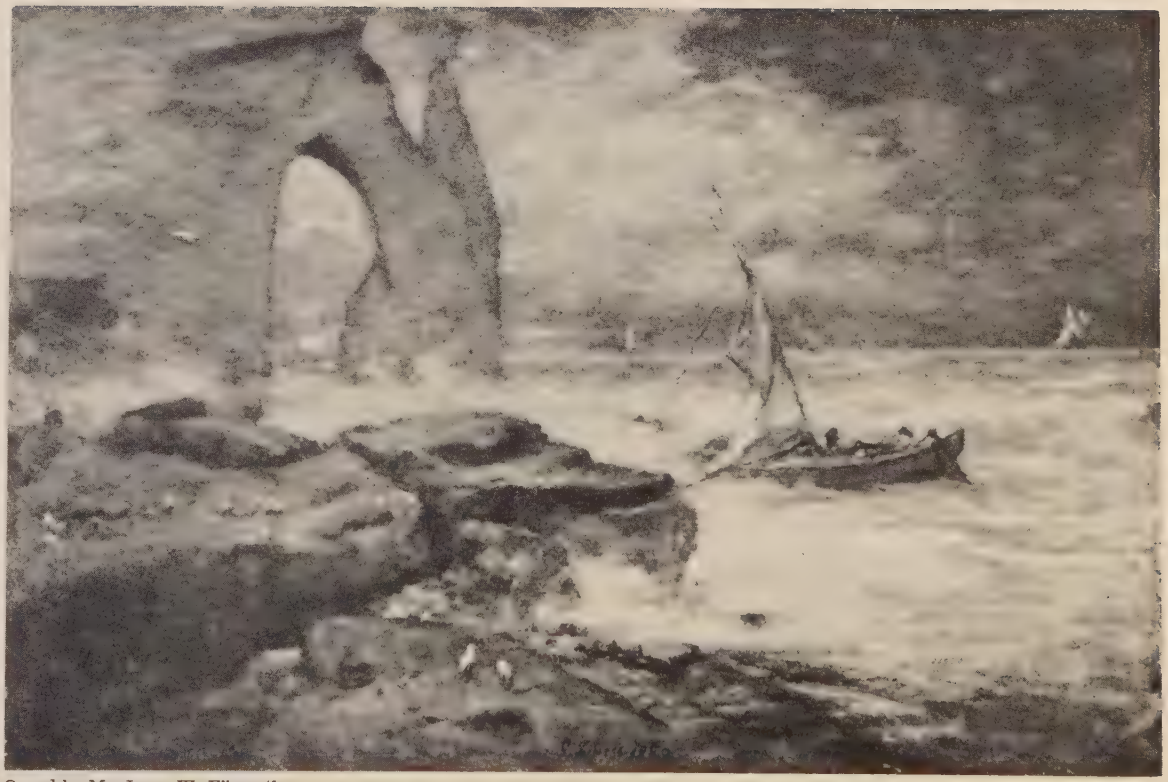
Any one who knows drawing knows that George Inness's drawing is something to wonder at. It is not drawing of a line, but masses that give the impression of movement and form that give the feeling of the truth of nature. I have spoken of Inness as hating tricks of brush and palette-knife, and yet he had a most wonderful skill of technic. Notice how a bush or weed is introduced. It is not drawn to give it shape. It is simply there, and with a twist of the brush it takes on life and grace as it bends to the gentle breeze that blows through the wood. All these little forms in Inness's pictures have character and meaning. They are not little dabs of pigment to give strength only, or to break up the monotony of the foreground, but are living things that move and add so much to the wonder of outdoors when walking through the greenwood.

Now I should like to show you the pictures in the private gallery of Mr. James W. Ellsworth, who has a dozen canvases which he bought through love of art, wherein lies their great value in his eyes.

We enter a spacious room, the library, with its books and paneled oaken walls. Here and there is a vase of rare antiquity, with ancient carvings and many things that bring back glimpses of those days when

Greece was in its glory. Here on these grand, but somber, walls are arranged the Inness pictures in exquisite taste.

See this one, the "Trout-Brook," painted in 1891, a wood in spring. The light is getting low enough to cast long shadows; a huge tree-trunk cuts almost through the middle of the picture; a pool of water at its roots reflects the sun, which is peeping through the distant foliage, which in the limpid light is almost like a vapor. Beside the pool, which is fringed with fresh, young, vibrant green, there stands a girl in dark who is almost silhouetted against that marvelous, indescribable light which permeates the entire canvas. A little farther back—I say back, because you can look into an Inness landscape—the figures of a shepherd and his dog are guarding a flock of sheep that is passing through the open space. But are they sheep? Well, never mind; it is something moving through the shimmering light. Then let your fancy roam and paint the picture to your liking. For that it was created. This is not a picture: it is nature, a creation, and so wonderfully wrought that you are really there. Sitting by the brook, you let your fancy out, forgetting all the troubles of the day, and bask in quiet peace with Inness in the soothing, mellow light that is saturating everything it touches on this fading day of spring.



Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

ETRATET

And now we swiftly change to another mood, and leave the languid, mellow spring twilight to look upon an angry, choppy sea, the spray of which dashes against the rocks of Normandy. The scene is at Etretat, and through the arched rocks you see an angry sun, the blood-red fury of which will soon be quenched behind the distant wave, and let the blue black clouds that are gathering in the west have sway and lash out their fury through the night. The fisher-boats come safely in. It bids fair for the morrow.

Now glance at this upright "Midsummer," a clump of oaks. How it fills you with a sense of grandeur! The form is majestic, and the big white clouds give its edge the keenness of a knife; but all is in such complete harmony of color and light and shade that it makes you feel great waves of rhythm, as of strains of music, a harmony that gives delight, no matter what the medium. This canvas was painted in 1892 in the big broad stage of his art, the last stage.

Here is a simple lowland dell surrounded by green trees. We find no strain in this composition, no attempt at picture-painting, but nature, pure nature, in midsummer. It shows a rock, some trunks of trees, one splashed with light, another dark and somber, and on that knoll something moving. It looks like two forms, one light, the other dark. What are they,

cattle or two lovers, perhaps, strolling through the wood? Shape them to your will; there is a lot of fancy when you are out with Inness.

Now, this "Indian Summer," signed in 1891, is all in light of an autumn afternoon. The sun is behind you and illumines the forms of cattle and of men. The picture is full of the kind of life that speaks of human things. In the foreground is a running brook. Some cattle have just raised their heads, and, having slaked their thirst, will stroll back through this field of autumn green to join their comrades, resting underneath a group of noble elms and oaks, all bathed in reddish light. As you look, you see the figure of a boy, whose glance you follow to the distant trees that melt into the warm, delicious vapors of an Indian summer day.

Now turn to this one, an entirely different kind of picture. It was painted back in the fifties, and how different from the later ones! Still, it has the Inness breath in it. You would know it anywhere. Each leaf is painted on the tree; a herd of cattle is passing from a field to take the road that crosses on a bridge that leads to home, where, after their bursting udders have yielded up their store, they 'll lay them down to rest, content to know they are lending to the joy of life that is pictured everywhere. They are bathed in that triumphant light which years and years ago

Henry Ward Beecher named "The Light Triumphant," and prophesied the future of its painter.

And now in contrast to this "Light Triumphant" there is "The Shower on the Delaware River," done in 1891, that is also full of light, but full of light that permeates everything. The deep shadow of the foreground sparkles with reflected light that filters through the rain, throwing a bow across the sky. The man and cattle here in front halt to gaze with wonder on this inspiring sight.

We have let our fancy run with Inness through the woods and fields, and now we come to this "Autumn Morning," but we must stop because the ground is wet. With heads erect, we 've wandered on oblivious to everything but that glorious autumn sky and the big hickory, the top of which is blazing with a rosy light, standing in relief against an azure blue. Unheeding, we find we have run our feet into a swamp, and must go back again. But wait. There is still another that we must see before we reluctantly turn away—"The Home at Montclair." It was painted just behind the artist's house, where many a field of waving corn and many a green pasture dotted with sheep was painted. But now it is all in white; its winter blanket is spread over all, keeping the earth warm until the coming of spring. There is nothing startling in this great work of art, and yet you are

filled with a sense of bigness, grandeur, and the very conviction of truth and nature. These are not pictures; they are *art*. They are done with art, not paint. They are not mere representations of things or nature; they are the soul of the master as he takes us with him in spirit and teaches us of God's out-of-doors.

George Inness never tried to deceive. His whole aim was to tell the truth that nature taught him. His great regret was that he was limited to paint. "If I could only paint it without paint!" was his lament.

He has often said that his great ambition was to paint a picture that would so disguise his technic that one would wonder how it was done. To make a fold of a dress with one sweep of the brush or a cloud by a wipe of the thumb was no virtue in his eyes. The dress should look real, and the cloud should float in the atmosphere. No matter how it was done, and the further it was removed from the suggestion of the brush, the greater the work of art. No; there was none of the mountebank in Inness. Everything he knew in art was gained by the hardest work, the closest and most minute study of nature. He would say to me: "Draw, draw, draw. Learn your art thoroughly, have it at the tips of your fingers, be able to do it with your eyes shut, so that if you have anything to express you will be able to do it without

Owned by Mr. James W. Ellsworth

SHOWER ON THE DELAWARE RIVER

the slightest hesitancy. Know forms, know nature, as a musician knows his notes before he attempts to render a harmony."

All of my father's work was most painstaking, and although at times it would seem that he was dashing madly and wildly at a canvas, so rapid was his work and so intense his feeling, nevertheless a sure knowledge of the form he wished to produce could always be traced in every touch. No matter with what intensity he worked, and he often rushed at a canvas as though his object were to thrust his fist through it, there would be no doubt that it was an elm-tree that he wished to represent, and not an oak. He would never set a pine-tree where a willow ought to grow, or place chrysanthemums in a lily pond. When he painted a skunk cabbage he knew just where to place it, and when he painted a rainbow it was absolutely right, and all the atmospheric conditions were thoroughly carried out in a truthful and scientific manner. To be sure, it might be suggested by just a little touch of light, but it would be in the right place, and the conditions of light would be exactly correct to account for its existence. When he painted a sunrise it could never be mistaken for a sunset. You feel the cool moisture of the morning. In his sunsets there is no doubt as to whether it is a

wet sky or a dry, hot one, because of his cloud forms, which he knew as truly as he knew the different trees. Looking at an Inness, you instinctively know the kind of day it is.

One day a great many years ago my father and I were walking through the old Academy of Design at Twenty-third Street and Fourth Avenue when we saw a group of artists looking at one of my father's pictures, which represented a late afternoon, with the sun going down behind a clump of trees as a big ball of red. When we approached one of the artists said:

"Inness, we have just been discussing this beautiful canvas of yours, but we cannot understand how you, who have been such a close student of nature, could have painted a sun in your picture that throws no shadow from the trees."

Father looked over his glasses and said:

"Have you studied nature so little that you don't know that if the sun is strong enough to cast a shadow of the trees it would burn your eyes out, and you could see nothing?"

When Inness painted a thunder-storm he painted thunder-clouds, not wind-clouds. Very few of his pictures were finished from nature, and in the later days of his life none. His pictures were expressions of himself, not imitations of what he saw; they were expressions of the feeling the thing he saw wrought

upon him. No truly great painting can be done by imitating nature alone. A man must study nature and master all its details until he knows them so thoroughly that when he is painting in his studio—creating, interpreting an emotion, putting himself on the canvas, as it were, for you to love, he does it unconsciously. The detail takes care of itself because it is there and leaves the true artist free to indulge his fancy and let his desire for the beautiful run rampant. To gain this great power which Inness had—and he had it stronger than any painter I ever knew—he struggled and studied with deep intensity, even to the most minute details, things which to-day are ridiculed by the men who are trying to invent a new way to paint. My father's study from nature was very methodical and painstaking from his earliest endeavors, and he kept the practice up until a very few years before his death. Of course I do not mean to imply that he never made quick sketches and almost instantaneous impressions from nature, for there are many such drawings to prove that he did; but when he painted from nature it was a very serious undertaking, as the letters to my mother from Milton, Siasconset, and Goochland indicate.

His method was generally to stain a canvas with a light-brown tint, say of raw umber, and when dry, take it out to the place he had selected, where he

would draw in most carefully with charcoal or pencil the forms of the things he saw and wished to have in the picture. He would often leave out a tree or other object that interfered with his composition. After the whole was drawn in, and every little crook in the limb of the tree that would give character, and every little sway in the roof of the barn, the twisting and rising and falling of the road, every clump of golden-rod or a straggling daisy that found itself out so late, would be put in with care, if it lent vigor to the composition. If not, it was as though it did not exist. Then with raw umber and some strong drier he would go over all the outlines, correcting here and there a bit of drawing. Then he would paint on the lights or opaque parts of his picture as near the local color of the object as he could, and the sky a rather neutral tone of yellow ocher, black and white. That constituted the first day's work; that was all.

The next day, due to the vehicle he had used, the canvas would be dry, and he would rub in the shadows, always keeping them transparent, and imitating as he went the texture of the rocks, the trees, and the grass. I have known him to keep at one study for a week or more at a time, using a quick-drying medium which enabled him to glaze his picture every day if he found it necessary. Glazing is done by passing a transparent color such as umber, black,

sienna, or cobalt over the canvas or parts of it, thinned down with oil or some such medium to make it flow. This lowers the tone of the canvas, but brings the whole in harmony, and enriches the color of the opaque parts of the picture. On this glaze the artist generally paints again with opaque color to bring up the light and add to the texture. This sometimes has the effect of darkening a picture too much. In such an event the whole canvas has to be scumbled again to bring it back to a lighter tone, although this is rarely done.

Scumbling is done by passing an opaque color over the picture, say white, yellow ocher, or cadmium. A scumble always has to be worked in, and if the shadows are to be kept transparent, it is necessary to wait another day for the scumble to dry that it may be glazed in again. Any transparent color will form a glaze.

Thus, according to this method, my father would drive along, glazing down and painting up the lights, rubbing and scrubbing, but *always keeping the color pure* until the picture was finished to his satisfaction or until he wearied of the subject.

These canvases rarely got to the public in their original condition, but would be worked over in the studio and often to such an extent that there was nothing left to suggest the subject first painted.

This method of painting, glazing, and scumbling, scratching and scrubbing, was practised by my father continuously, though occasionally he departed from it and painted frankly. He did anything that produced the effect he wanted, but he usually went back to his old love—transparent color.

One day Pop and I were painting in the old University Building on Washington Square, where we had a studio, when a young man appeared. He said he was a student at the Art Students League, and that he looked upon George Inness as the greatest landscape-painter, and would consider it a great privilege if he might be allowed to watch him paint.

"Come right in," said my father, "and if you can learn anything from me, you are welcome to it. I will go on with this picture that I am trying to bring into shape. Sit down." Then he squeezed a lot of raw umber on his palette, picked up the largest brush he could find, and with the aid of a medium that looked like Spaulding's glue he went at the canvas as though he were scrubbing the floor, smearing it over, sky and all, with a thin coat of brown. The young man looked aghast, and when Pop was through said:

"But, Mr. Inness, do you mean to tell me that you resort to such methods as glazing to paint your pictures?"

Father rushed up to the young man, and, glowering at him over his glasses, as he held the big brush just under his visitor's nose, exclaimed:

"Young man, have you come here from the Art Students League to tell me how to paint? Then go back there and tell them I 'd paint with mud if it would give me the effect I wanted."

In the Art Institute in Chicago there is one of the most representative collections of Innesses in the country, thanks to the public-spirited generosity of Mr. Edward B. Butler of that city, who himself is a painter in his leisure moments. This beautiful and complete museum of art has devoted an entire room to George Inness. It contains twenty-one canvases, showing examples of work ranging from 1870 to his last period, which continued to within a very short time of his death.

One of these canvases, "The Catskill Mountains," a large picture, dated 1870, shows an afternoon sun pouring down from behind blue clouds, tipped with opalescent light, which is thrown across the mountain-range, permeating the whole scene. The style of it is very similar to "Peace and Plenty," and shows his earlier methods. You will notice that everything is made out with minute delineation. Every tree is painted individually and stands apart, this elaboration being carried from foreground to distance; and

though it has a wonderful envelopment and charm of light, it does not deal so strongly with the imaginative as does the "Mill-pond," which was painted at a much later period.

"The Mill-pond" is an upright, and depicts a tall, red oak, which fills most of the picture, and by its very redness catches the eye. It is necessary to sit before this canvas awhile to grasp its full meaning. At first you are impressed only with this great mass of reddish gold, standing out in intense relief against a patch of blue sky. A pond fills the middle distance, across which are trees so indistinct and so clothed in mystery that at first glance you wonder what they are. They are painted in so broad and indefinite a way that they seem to lose all sense of individual forms, and in contrast to the "Catskill Mountains" become a mass of green, partly enveloped in the sky. But as you look more carefully you begin to make out certain undefinable forms, and little lights and shades that take on all sorts of shapes that you were not aware of at first. And now straight across the pond your eye catches the dam as it leads the water to the mill. The mill is not visible to the human eye, but your fancy tells you it is hidden snugly behind the trees. The charm of this picture is its color and mystery, and but for a boy and boat upon the lake it might seem monotonous; but this gives a spot of light

From the Butler collection in The Art Institute of Chicago

THE MILL POND

and lends human interest to the scene. In a brilliant green foreground a gnarled and rotting stump, with whitened bark, stands out vividly, bringing to completion a beautiful composition.

In an upright, "Early Morning, Tarpon Springs," we have a Florida scene. The tall, straight pines stand out against a sky wet with soft, gray mist, drifting up into blue. Pink-tipped clouds float lazily by, as though they dared not hurry lest they break the stillness and the charm of this fresh morning. A rosy light brightens up the red-roofed houses clustered in the middle distance, and at our feet a shadow veils a little bridge which leads across the narrow brook to that golden light that fills everything beyond.

"Threatening" is a picture that was painted in the last years of my father's life. It is dated 1891, and shows the breadth of technic which characterizes that period. It is just one great vast tone of gray, with dark, somber clouds rolling up. Delicately relieved against the stormy sky are fresh, green trees. All the earth is in a pall of lurid light, cast from a golden spot that is fading in the mist, soon to be swallowed up in the coming storm. The strongest point of interest is a low, thatched hut in dark, with the figure of a man standing in front, hesitating to venture far from shelter. This picture is painted thickly, with an enamel, so to speak.

In direct contrast of technic to "Threatening," I should like to point out to you "Moonlight on Passamaquoddy Bay." This picture is not in the Butler collection,—and so far I have confined my remarks to that room,—but from the very way in which this canvas is painted I consider it well worth one's while to study, and so I must mention it here. It is in the Ryerson Collection, in the Art Institute, Chicago, and is one of the most remarkable canvases that Inness ever did in point of technic. To begin with, it is absolutely free from anything that might be called academic, but it shows a wonderful skill that could come only from the hand of a master who possessed a vast knowledge of forms and detail. This picture was done on a pure white canvas with thin washes or scrubs of color no thicker than water. The whole canvas is nothing but a stain of bluish gray, relieved here and there by a tinge of other colors, giving a sense of local color. The only thick pigment in the whole picture is the moon, which is laid on with a solid dab of white.

The scene represents a hill overlooking the village of Saint Andrews, New Brunswick, which nestles on the Passamaquoddy Bay at the mouth of the St. Croix River. Everything is enveloped in a gray-blue light that spreads itself across the river and shows the dim

outline of hills beyond. On the hillside smoke rises from the chimney of a red house, and the village slumbers behind the trees, whence rise delicate and almost invisible vapors. You do not see the forms, for there are no definite outlines, but you feel them. The moon, the only bit of paint, is reflected in the quiet, placid bay. The white spire of a church juts up into the night sky, and the remarkable thing about this form is that it is indicated not by paint, but by a few deft and telling scratches of the brush-handle, as are likewise indicated the forms of boats and even the figure of a man. It is in reality nothing but a scratch, but it keeps its place most astonishingly, and from the proper distance, say six or eight feet, the whole canvas shows forth the most painstaking detail, true in every touch, with every touch in its rightful place and nothing left to chance.

I remember very well when my father painted this picture and when he saw the scene which inspired it. Becoming filled with its romance, he exclaimed: "Oh, if I could only catch the subtle mystery of this! I will try in the morning." That he succeeded is only too well proved in the canvas before us.

I have not space between these covers to describe all of the Butler Collection, and those I have mentioned I have not chosen because I consider them the

finest, but because I think they give a fair example of the whole, and show the different methods of his touch.

As I sat in the Inness Room on one of the free days, when the museum was thronged with visitors, I marveled to hear the passing remarks of those who had just come from other rooms, where are shown beautiful canvases by noted men of more or less academic skill, and to see them sit down and say with delight, "It makes me feel that it is real, that I am actually there in the fields and woods." It is just that that is the charm of Inness. To me Turner is grand, dramatic, beautiful in tone and color, fantastic, and unreal. Corot is wonderful in tonal quality and luminous enamel in his skies, which, with the delicate drawing of graceful forms, give his pictures a great charm. All is very beautiful, but all is Corot, and to me it seems as though he had invented something beautiful, or, if not invented, had discovered one phase of nature and was there content to stop. But with George Inness I feel the very breath of nature. I feel as though I were actually with him in the picture itself.

Some artists, to express their appreciation of a work of art, use queer expressions. "It 's naïve," "It 's amusing," "It has things in it." I once went to the studio of an artist friend and told him that I

From the Martin A. Ryerson collection in The Art Institute of Chicago

MOONLIGHT ON PASSAMAQUODDY BAY

should like to buy one of his pictures. He showed me two that I liked equally well. One represented a large boat, the other a landscape. I said I found it hard to choose which one I wanted. He told me he would choose the boat because it looked so much like a Persian rug. I replied:

"I agree with you; but as I have a Persian rug, I will take the other." Well, what is art for? To be "amusing," to have "things in it," or to express some emotion wrought in one by nature? "Amusing," "Naïve," "Things" do not express the pictures of George Inness. He had no tricks. His striving was to produce something grand, big, beautiful, true.

And why does not the buying public get in touch with the artist, and read him and learn from him the object of art, the way to look at pictures, the way to learn to feel, and to get out of nature all that she has to tell us?

A man who is interesting himself in paintings should go among the painters, visit their studios, get their point of view as to what is fine in art, learn the reason why it is fine, learn what is meant by tone, drawing, construction. Learn to appreciate art for the thought it expresses and the story of life it tells. The artist is the only one who can tell him of the art. He is the only one who knows. Then why not go to him instead of to a dealer whose object is to praise

the thing that he can get the biggest price for, and whose strongest argument is that what he is selling will turn out to be an investment? What is the song one most frequently hears among collectors of pictures? The price he paid for it and what it will be worth to him a few years hence. Many collections are made for notoriety and a feeling that it will be a safe speculation. Its beauty, its art, or the emotion it awakens, has nothing to do with it. Paintings should be bought because one wants them, loves them, wants them about as treasures of beauty, which take him out of the turmoil of business and lead him into beautiful paths of delightful thoughts.

Of course it is very delightful to be able to give the point of view of different men and to discover how they arrived at perfection. But what a relief it would be to be taken to some collector's house and have him point out a canvas whose painter is unknown —a canvas, unsigned, but so wonderful in expression of light and shade, in color and conception, that he considers it one of the gems of his collection! Yes, I have known a few, a very few such collectors.

So many of our ultra-wealthy class neglect the chance they have to build up a great art in our own new country by encouraging the men of talent that they find about them. They hunt the world over to find the work of some old masters long since dead, and

for whose work they can dare pay enormous prices. Some of the works are great and an acquisition to this country and a lesson to many an art student, but a lot of it is perfect rot, and if produced by a living painter, would find it hard to enter one of our exhibitions, and instead of being worth so many thousands of dollars, would hardly bring as many cents.

With many men there seems to be a rivalry to see who will pay the biggest price for an old master, and I have no doubt that one of these days some brave multi-millionaire will have the courage to pay a million dollars for a canvas. Of course just now that would be a little high and might bring on some ridicule.

And, now, how shall we train the painter? I was not very long ago asked to visit an art school. I was taken into a room where a class of the younger pupils were at work. One girl of about fourteen years was pointed out as the most promising student in the class. There she sat at an easel, a palette on her thumb, with enough gobs of paint upon it to cover the outside of the town hall. She had on a blouse which clothed her from head to foot, and this was covered with all the colors of the rainbow, and twice as many besides. She had paint on her hands, paint on her face, and on her hair and shoes. She was painting from a model, an old lady; it was the por-

trait class. The child's canvas was a great mass of gobs of paint that stood out in relief and cast long shadows across it. The hideous smears had no resemblance to a human form. There were great green daubs for eyes, a streak of black in lieu of a mouth, and streaks of yellow, green, pink, and blue for color of the face. I looked aghast, but said nothing. How could I? I was invited there to praise, not to criticize. The instructor told me she considered this child her most promising pupil.

"You see," she said, "she has originality; she sees the whole as an impression and her color is brilliant."

I asked if they had a class in drawing from cast.

"Oh, no," she replied; "we do not wish to hamper them by mere imitation."

This is not a fair sample of all schools, but there is more of this sort of teaching than there should be, and more than would be believed by any one this side of an insane asylum; and from such schools as these we have obtained many works to fill many walls of the Grand Central Palace in New York and other places of exhibition.

In the good old days when Inness learned to paint he had to go to Barker in Newark, who gave him first a copy-card to work from, then a block of plaster, then a bottle, ball, or hoop, to learn to make it square or round, as the case may be, to train the hand to

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THE TROUT BROOK

make the form, to train the eye to see. So every student should begin. The old way is the best—to train the hand to make the things the student sees. After he learns the forms and how to make them he is ready to study art, and learn by the combination of colors and lines to represent the things he wants to interpret. After he has accomplished this feat he is well equipped to try in any way he can to express himself in art.

No man has yet attained a high mark in art, in *any* art that will live, without having gone through the hardest kind of training. There is no short road to art. Genius alone never made an artist. And mark my words, there will come a time when there will hardly be ash-barrels enough to cart away the stuff that is classed as art to-day.

What would Corot be without his graceful line, his superb drawing? Or Millet or Rousseau or Troyon or any one of them whose canvases are bringing large prices, and are sought after by those who would have the best? The man whose canvas looks as though a flock of crows had danced across it may have his day. Awards have been given for fantastic daubs of decomposed, misshapen, naked ladies disporting amid dust-brush trees and gobs of gaudy paint and pools of slime, reflecting cotton-batting clouds, and chimneys all askew, and flat-iron buildings

and metropolitan skyscrapers that lean like Pisa's tower.

The same thing exists in all the arts, in literature, in drama, and in music. For God's sake! let us awake from this hideous nightmare and come back to truth and purity and sense!

Some men have accused Inness of lack of technic and of early training in his art; that he did not make of himself as good a craftsman as others might have made of him; that he was never thoroughly grounded in the grammar of painting, with a none too certain hand; sketchy, faulty drawing, scratchy, glazy, scrubby, tortured in the attempt to get effects; dots for cows and other figures, careless spots that take no form, etc. Take for instance this criticism, which appeared in the New York "Evening Post," January 5, 1895, which was otherwise complimentary:

> He had the mind of a Romanticist, keen in its artistic perceptions, and very susceptible to emotional impression, but capricious, headlong, impulsive, prone to extravagance and given to chimerical theories. It lacked in repose and it lacked in tenacity. Seeking for truth, it too often ran hopelessly to error, through pursuit of fancy and lack of definite aim.
>
> Perhaps some of his failure to realize fully his ideal was due to a faulty hand. He never received a thorough technical training. His was not a nature that could or would submit to any working out of a formula but his own, and so he soon abandoned masters. He was not, however, a

provincial or ill-educated painter, by any means. The art of the world was better known to him than to many Parisians. He traveled much and knew the methods of others quite well. . . .

Not even Rousseau and the Fontainebleau painters could make him pay the compliment of imitation, or assimilation. He followed no one. A self-reliant man, he was, as regards his technic, a self-made man, and as is usually the case, he did not make of himself so good a craftsman as others might have made of him. He was never thoroughly grounded in the grammar of painting, and sometimes his drawing will not parse, nor the lighting of his foregrounds agree in gender, number and person with the lighting of his backgrounds. Some painters have a way of complaining that their technic bothers them, which to their hearers means only that they do not see truly; but that was not the case with Inness. He saw truly enough, but failing to reach his aim at the first dash he doubted himself, took another course, and eventually encountered the same difficulty—the inability to realize conception.

Part of this failure was due, as we have said, to a not too certain hand. The eye saw clearly enough, as witness the fine sun effect of the "Gleaners," but he never carried the picture to completion. The technical problem was too much for him. Many of the pictures in this collection bear witness to the technical difficulties he met with. They are said to be sketches, but there is hardly a free first sketch in the gallery. They are *pictures* kneaded, thumbed, scraped, glazed, tortured in the attempt to get effects. And this uncertainty of hand grew upon him as he advanced in years. His early pictures are sharp and hard in outline, but they are struck off easily. In his later works, notably "The Beeches," "The Coming Storm," and the "Red Oaks" he is

labored, mealy in texture and thoroughly weary of his task. Yet we are disposed to unsay our words when we meet with the "Passing Storm" of the Halsted Collection. Here it looks as though a master hand with great power had drawn the old willow and put in the stormy sky with a sure, swift touch. The picture is as strong as though done freely under first inspiration.

There has been so much extravagant talk about Inness since his death that it seems necessary for some one to point out his limitations, but we would not be understood as saying he was all limitation. On the contrary he accomplished much, and no landscape-painter in the history of American art holds higher rank. With more mental balance and a surer technic he would have been the greatest landscape-painter of any time or people. His limitations denied him that rank, but still left him among the great ones. He was an extremely sensitive and impressionable organization, a man of great originality, and his collected pictures show that he was versatile and possessed of many resources. He was always recording his impression, using facts about him, merely as pegs to hang it upon, never given to detail, and always wrapped up in the sentiment of light, color and atmosphere. These he in many canvases displayed with convincing power, and occasionally he grasped the strength of landscape in a way that would have put Rousseau to his mettle in equaling. There was never anything small or petty about either his conception or execution. His vision was broad, and all his life he was striving for the ensemble of earth, air, sky and light. He knew they were a unit and could figure it out cleverly with geometrical figures, and it was his great aim to demonstrate it in art. He never did demonstrate it to his own satisfaction, but he certainly made his aim intelligible to many people, and to many more

gave an idea of the majesty of creation which they never could grasp from nature itself. Such achievement is not failure, but success—great success.

Now, in all these seeming "limitations" which are cited in the above article lay Inness's power, a certain power which was never possessed by any other artist; for it was the very working out of his own training, his indefatigable search for truth, the assiduous study of different methods and craftsmanship, that gave him his power of technic. And as for craftsmanship and certainty of hand, he surpassed them all, as many a canvas testifies, where pigment is put on with a firmness and precision that might well be envied by the greatest of the craftsmen. All this skill of technic he had, but he was ever trying to disguise the craftsmanship and show you nature, mysterious, suggestive, lights and shades that come and go, clouds that move and take on ever-changing shapes. It was through this great knowledge of the grammar of art that he is able to hold the attention of all who look into his pictures, and to show you new things at every glance. As the eye wanders over the canvas you discover things you did not see before: some moving form, a figure emerging from beneath the trees, a puff of smoke or vapor rising from behind the distant hills. With these things he leads your fancy on and makes you forget that it is paint and canvas before you.

The thought of technic is lost in the larger emotion of the grandeur of nature.

How often have you, while wandering through a wood, seen forms that look like things you know. Sometimes you think it is a man strolling through the far-away field, to find later that it is only a withered stump or clump of grass; or perhaps a spot of light that speaks of sparkling water where you may slake your thirst proves to be, on near approach, nothing but a whitened rock that is peeping from the underbrush. Nature is full of sounds and forms that awaken the imagination and fill the earth with vibrancy and with life. It is this that Inness gives you in his canvases. He gives you nature with all her subtlety.

He never tried to make a skilful work of art. He was so skilful that he could disguise that very skill, so that he almost attained his great ambition to paint a picture without paint. And I should like to quote here Mr. Victor Harris, who owns the "Moonrise." When asked what name a picture had, he said: "Inness pictures need no names; they all speak nature." This canvas, "Moonrise," is one of the most beautiful things my father ever did. In subtlety of tone and richness of quality it is surpassed by none.

I have never known a picture that can be grasped at one glance, that is startling and attracts the eye

by its vigorous painting and striking form alone, that carries, as some would express it, to satisfy me. A work of art must have subtlety of tone and a certain amount of mystery that can never be seen at first glance. It must be looked at a long time before its subtle tones can be grasped; and if it is great, it grows upon you, and the longer you look, the more you see, and to describe it is almost impossible, because you never see it twice alike. It changes with your mood. It is a thing to live with. You study it, you learn to see the soul of it. It is like a face that becomes beautiful because you have learned to know and love the soul behind it. When a picture gives you this effect, it is great art. This is the greatness of Inness.

One night while in Chicago I was dining at the home of my friend Ralph Cudney, and we drifted into the subject of art. We mentioned the simplicity of nature found in Inness canvases.

"Yes," said Cudney, "they always give me the feeling of nature. They seem to take me back to my childhood, which was spent in the woods of the Schawangunk Mountains. They are not photographs of trunks of trees and rocks and things, but just out-of-doors. I feel that I am home again on the old farm, where I drove the cows, and when tired after work I sit down here and rest beside my Innesses.

I have six of them. Which one I like the best I cannot say, sometimes it is this one, sometimes that; but they all tell the sweet story of the woods and fields.

"In this one, 'Twilight,' I feel as though I, and not the girl on the canvas, am going for the cows, crossing that log that spans the brook. Yes, there is something in these canvases of Inness that fills me with a sense of rest."

The whole story of the genius and the mission of Inness seems to me to be summed up in a little story told to me by Mr. Thomas B. Clarke.

"There was a time," said Mr. Clarke, "when everything in life seemed lost to me. All the sunshine was gone, and the weight of sorrow was heavy on my heart. One whom I loved dearly had been suddenly stricken and taken from me, and with her going went all the gladness of life. Your father had often talked to me of his beliefs and of the life beyond, and of the message he was trying to send out in his pictures but I never understood.

"In the grief that was almost too heavy to bear I wandered about the house like a lost soul. I was inconsolable. I happened to glance up at a little Inness which I owned and always loved, 'A Gray, Lowery Day,' and like a burst of life your father's message of hope and eternity came over me. He spoke

Owned by Mr. Victor Harris

MOON RISE

through that little canvas, and my soul understood what my mind had not. I was a different man from that hour. It was the only thing that could console me."

If that picture had been the only one Inness ever painted, his life would have been worth while and his destiny fulfilled; but I believe that every living picture is giving out the same message, and that Inness lives forever, speaking to us in his canvases and fulfilling that immortal destiny which was the passion of his life.

It is pleasant to travel with Inness on a hot, sultry day, to sit beside the cooling brook, and watch the fallen leaf drift sluggishly by, and wonder how it will feel when it reaches the mill-dam and is hurled over the brink with a dash that crumples it up in a smother of foam, and finally casts it well out into the placid pond, to sit and swelter in the sun until the breeze springs up from that cloud which is lying on the horizon and comes to waft it to the shore, to make a bed for a dragon-fly or some lazy tadpole, as we can so easily do in his landscapes.

Or take another canvas, with its cumulus-clouds, its thunder-heads lying low behind the distant hills. You wonder if that load of hay drawn by its lumbering oxen will reach the red barn in the valley before the storm breaks upon them.

Then the one with rushing clouds and blackened landscape. A light appears in the west, a little patch of blue. It is going to clear, and you want to thrust out the back of your hand to see if it is still raining before venturing out of the barn where you have taken refuge.

And then you travel with him to a lonely dell, to sit on a rock and watch the twilight fade behind the trees and know the day is done. It makes you think of what it carries of the past and to form some resolution for the morrow. All these things the Inness pictures give in an amazing degree. This is their mission—to send out a message of truth. George Inness tells a story in every canvas, and always tells a story of love, hope, and peace.

I attach little importance to the influence that foreign travel had on the art of Inness. How would he have developed without this travel? Of course we are all influenced more or less by what we see in others, their methods of painting, the way they use the brush or palette-knife or thumb. Volon painted fish and kettles with his thumb, and got some pleasing tones. The Barbison painters glazed and got transparent color. Cazan mixed a lot of tones on his palette with some such color as umber as a base. This gave him soft, velvety tones, which enveloped his whole picture and gave the same texture to sky,

houses, trees, water, and rocks. It is all velvet, and very sweet and mushy. Now, all these tricks are of value, and a student would naturally adopt one or the other that would give him the texture he preferred. Probably Inness found in the Barbison painters a method that he liked. That he found among the Frenchmen a broader way of painting, that gave a bigger sense of nature, there is no doubt, but had he not had these advantages would his later development have been different? I think not, for from the very start he strove to overthrow the old traditions, and tried to paint the landscape as he saw and felt it, and he would have arrived at the same result, for he surpassed them all in breadth and truth of nature. He always was George Inness and always painted Inness, and where he best succeeded was here in the American landscape that he loved. The landscapes that he painted while abroad never reached the grandeur and the beauty of the things he did at home. And the pictures that he painted at three-score years and nine were the greatest of them all. We have produced many painters and some great ones, but never one who takes one out to nature in all its moods and makes him feel her very breath as Inness does.

His pictures are always beautifully composed, and with a thorough balance and completeness. As I

have said before, one can always look into an Inness picture. It is complete in every part, so that the eye travels from one object to another without effort, and everything is enveloped and held within the vision. Many paintings are so faulty in perspective and drawing that it is impossible to see both ends of the canvas at the same time, no matter how small it may be. This fault is never found in Inness. He paints only what the eye can take in in one vision.

Cut a hole in a piece of paper, say two by three inches, then measure diagonally across it from corner to corner, the distance being about three and a half inches. Multiply this by three, and the result is ten and a half inches. Now hold the paper ten and a half inches from the eye, and whatever can be seen through the opening can be grasped in one vision. Hold it closer to the eye, and it will be necessary to shift the eye to see all that is contained within the opening. My father held invariably to this mathematical exactness which gives a perfect harmony of vision.

Let us take the canvas entitled "Under the Greenwood" from the point of view of composition. It is an upright and represents a wooded hillside, with sheep and a boy in it. Now, in the first place my father has painted a large oak tree exactly in

UNDER THE GREENWOOD

the middle of the picture. This makes a very bad composition and gives a sense of unbalance; so to counteract this, he puts a nearer tree to the left of it and leans it away from the oak. This acts as a balance and gives a harmony of line. He then puts the figure of a boy in the right-hand foreground to make another balance, and to relieve the foreground of monotony. Then he puts a strong light on the trunk of the oak, and to balance the light he repeats it on the leaning tree. Then he carries the light to the upper right-hand corner of the picture in the form of a white cloud. Now he has three lights in a row. This is awkward, and stops abruptly; so he puts a light to the right of the picture, which takes the form of a path. This gives him a harmony of line and a graceful play of light. But he finds the boy in the foreground out of place and too abrupt. He does not want to take it out, for it gives interest to the foreground; so he puts a dark sheep between the boy and the oak, which makes another balance. But he is not yet quite satisfied. There is too much of a jump from the dark sheep to the light on the oak, and there is not enough incident; so he paints in a group of sheep in light near the trunk and silhouettes the dark sheep against a light strip of middle distance. Then, to give a dramatic power to the

whole, he paints a black shadow in the background. But now he finds a lack of interest at the left of the leaning tree, and puts in another sheep. The composition is now complete, and as he would express it, "needs only a little tickling up here and there, and we have a perfect harmony." None of these spots of light and lines and figures are put in haphazard. They have each and all been thought out to give expression to the story he wished to tell and the whole composition, though elaborate, is within the field of vision.

I have cited examples enough of composition, color, tone, and medium to show just how he painted; so now dropping technic, let 's take a stroll among some Inness canvases, and see him only in his different moods.

Here is a peaceful valley, with here and there a clump of elms the tops of which are tipped with light from rays of the sun, which dips below the hills behind you. A field of golden grain glistens with the drops of rain that still cling to it. All is quiet in the grain-field here below that only a moment since was writhing in the tempest that is rushing overhead. It drives great clouds before it, which rush and tumble, swooping now and then to dash themselves against a mountain-top, and then to rise again, to be enveloped in a ray of light that turns them into molten

gold. As they rush along, the sign of promise is disclosed, and all 's at rest again, and birds sing out their praises to the sun.

And now let 's stroll with Inness through this low marshland. It 's all in silver gray, but as we look we see the sky is flecked with opalescent light sifting through blackened smoke, which belches from the distant chimney top. Now it is lighted by the sun, which has changed that belt of saw-grass to a mat of yellow gold. And see that little cloud that 's arising just beyond. It grows, and changes into indigo, and on its edge a rainbow rests. Now a shadow throws a blanket on the ground that lends intenseness to the scene and glorifies the sign of promise beyond.

Now here we have a stretch of dark-blue sea, the distant line of which is lost in darkened vapor, from out of which there peeps a blood-red sun. But up above the cloud there shines the golden glory of the west, which studs the sand with diamonds at our feet.

And now see a maddened, rushing sky that is all ablaze, as though the whole world were aflame, and from beyond a locomotive pours out smoke as black as night, and gives the feeling that something fearsome is about.

And here, in this little one, a placid brook reflects a mellow twilight sky, which silhouettes the figure of

a boy, who casts a stone to frighten the bird that is rising from the marsh.

Once more, view the whirling, swirling clouds, which almost touch the earth in their mad race across the plain strewn with leaves and broken branches from the trees. A flock of crows are drifting with the gale, and fleck the scene with spots of black and fear.

Before we turn away, let 's cross this field that is bathed with soft, gray, mellow light that gives a sense of stillness, not of the grave, but of the kind that follows some great strain of music that has died away, and left a hush of awe, as through the limpid gray we see a mellow disk. It is the harvest moon, which calls us to the wealth of all the earth, and brings us peace with nature and with God.

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